
THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
VITTORIO ALFIERI.

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VITTORIO ALFIERI;

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN,

BY
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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DON GARCIA. 1859
A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COSMO.
ELEONORA.
DIEGO.

PIERO.
GARCIA.
Guards.

SCENE,—The palace of Cosmo in Pisa.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cosmo, Diego, Piero, Garcia.

Cos. Oh sons, ye are not now assembled here
In a light cause. 'Twill be most grateful to me,
Since to the test ye now will all be brought,
'To make a trial of your several skills.
But each of you, ere I divulge my thoughts,
Swear to me solemnly to speak the truth,
And in the secret of your hearts to hide
The mystery which I now unfold to you.

Di. I swear it by this sword.

Pi. I by my father.

Gar. I swear it by my honour.

Cos. Hear me then.—

My cause is yours: let not your heart admit

Hate, love, or partialities, not mine.
 Such I esteem you, that I do not think
 That any counsel more than yours will serve me.
 'Twere bootless now to recapitulate
 Wherefore the light inhabitants of Florence
 To me are irksome; wherefore I retired
 To seek in these beloved walls of Pisa
 A calmer dwelling place, ye all well know.
 From hence with safer and as tight a curb
 I equally controul the turbulent,
 Malignant, factious, faithless multitude,
 Unfit to govern, indisposed to obey;
 Yet their obedience is no longer doubtful;
 Although, on this account, I do not sit
 Securely on the throne. Our ancestors
 Often encounter'd formidable perils;
 And every object to my heart suggests
 A warning whisper, that I should not trust
 A transient sunshine, a fallacious calm.
 For the most part my enemies subdued,
 Dispersed, or slain, I see alone of these
 One formidable now remain to me:
 He is allied to me in blood; in mien
 Conciliatory; though I heed it not,
 He evermore pursues me like my shadow.
 Modest in words, obsequious in manners;
 But, in his inmost heart, replete with rage,
 And circumventive purposes...

Di. He is

Cos. The impious Salviati.—What though he
 Be my near relative; although the son
 Of the brother of my mother, he no less,
 Than was his father once, is our sworn foe.

That fierce old man, (you've heard me speak of him)
 Who preach'd of liberty, because the throne,
 Although he wish'd it, was beyond his reach;
 He that attempted to dissuade me from it,
 E'en on the very day in which I was,
 By the concurring senate and the people,
 Invited to the throne. My mother's tears,
 And his extreme old age, a pardon gain'd
 For his pestiferous audacity.

But this contested sceptre he not thus
 Could ever pardon me. What could he do,
 An impotent old man? The messengers
 Of death he heard, and sinking to the tomb,
 That ineffectual poison in his heart
 Which he conceal'd, e'en to the very dregs
 He pour'd it in the bosom of his son.
 Now I am sure that, son of a scorn'd father,
 He hates me bitterly, and, what is worse,
 He speaks it not: hence vigilance in me
 Is indispensable. My mother perhaps
 Was, while she lived, a hindrance to his views
 Now she is dead we should no more delay;
 We should not only wrest from him the power
 Of injuring, but attempting it. The means
 The best and speediest for such effect,
 Freely let each of you point out to me. *

Di. Father and lord, not only of ourselves
 But of all here, what can I say to thee
 Of policy of state, which thou know'st not?
 Methinks who pleases not his lord, of guilt,
 Is, by this fact, sufficiently convicted.
 What then is he who, hat'd, hates again?
 Say, has a monarch relatives? Since fate,

When she bestows a throne, denies all friends,
 A prince should never tolerate a foe,
 Neither an open foe nor foe conceal'd.
 Take from him warning who before thee held
 The Tuscan sceptre, Alexander, he
 Who died, by treachery butcher'd ; he should teach
 thee

E'en more than others to distrust relations.
 Feign'd amity, and long-feign'd services,
 And consanguinity, at length bestow'd
 On the perfidious Lorenzo means
 To plunge his dagger in the royal breast.
 The prince in part of his refractory mind
 Was well aware, yet would he not diffide :
 Nay, he caress'd him, made him of his friends,
 So that at last he slew him.—Ah ! forestall
 The hate of others : lenity, display'd
 By those who can dispense with it, alone
 To terror is attributed : and kings,
 More than all thoughts, should hide their thoughts of
 fear.

'Tis the most jealous mystery of state ;
 Woe if it be discovered ; thence at once
 The fears of others cease ; and what ensues ?
 'Tis my advice that Salviati perish ;
 But let him perish in the eye of day.
 He offends thee ; and thou condemn'st him justly.
 But suffer not obscure and timid clouds
 To intercept the vivifying rays
 Of thy unlimited authority.

Gar. If to a prince born on the throne, and the peace
 Beneath the tranquil shade of prosperous fate,
 Amid the luxuries of a court matured,

I here should speak, as I intend to do,
Father, thou would'st not hear me now at length,
To mould the monarch who has never seen
The threatening aspect of adversity,
Would be a vain, impracticable task.
But, Cosmo, thou who from the throne afar,
And from its hopes, amid vicissitudes,
Hast past thy youthful years; on Tyber's banks,
Now on the shores of Adria, and now
'Mid lonely rocks of the Ligurian Alps,
Concealed by thy mother; finally,
Thou who hast felt the weight of powerful hatred,
Lend me, I pray thee, a benignant ear.
For many years have fortune, art, force, favour,
Given to the Medicean race, by turns,
An uncontrollable authority;
To which more splendour, strength, security,
Thou hast since added every day. Thou know'st
That Alexander's murderer hoped in vain
In a free state to meet with an asylum.
Thy sword in Venice reach'd him: unavenged
He fell there, where impartial laws alone
Maintain authority: and in his claws
The mighty lion saw the suppliant slain,
Who in his roaring placed too firm a trust;
He saw it, silently. Thy terrible name
Made either sea that bounds Italia tremble.
What wish for more? A throne without a foe?
That never was: to slay them all? Hast thou
A sword to do such prodigies? Reflect
Upon thy ancestors: which of them died
Beloved and powerful, in tranquillity?
Cosmo alone, he who enjoy'd what power

To him was delegated ; he whom power
 Sought in proportion as he sought it not.
 *Think of the others : Julian transfix'd ;
 The bold Lorenzo scarcely saved alive ;
 Pedro expell'd ; and Alexander slain.
 Yet these of blood were never avaricious.
 Ah ! these impressively suggest to thee
 How slippery is the basis of that throne
 Founded on blood.—Thou wilt slay Salviati,
 Perhaps not guilty : other foes will rise ;
 *They may be slain ; still others will succeed.—
 Suspicion's sword at length will turn its edge
 Insatiable 'gainst him that grasp'd the hilt.
 Ere it descend, hold it aloft a little :
 Strike but one blow, and it will rest no more.
 He who at once thee and thy fame offends,
 Oh father, pardon thou.

Di. 'Tis ever thus
 From me he differs.

Pi. I in years inferior,
 And thence in wisdom, since my sire commands,
 Will notwithstanding speak. Diego's words
 Are, like his actions, bold ; nor do I blame,
 Although my judgment utterly dissents
 From his, the sentiments of Garcia.
 I, at the very name of Salviati,
 Which sounds to me like guilt, profoundly shudder.
 Another Salviati dared to aim
 At our Lorenzo the perfidious sword.
 Father, I only grieve that hitherto
 Thou'st shewn thyself too openly his foe.
 Not that thou e'er could'st change that double heart
 By more conciliatory practices ;

ACT THE FIRST.

But now and then it happens that a prince
Incurs less blame when he destroys his friends,
Than when he punishes his foes.—But one
Of the so many deaths with which the rage
Of dark Tiberius ne'er was satisfied,
One only was acceptable to Rome.
Whether Sejanus's conspiracy
Were true or false, his obsequies were mark'd
With taunts, and songs, and smiles, and public joy.
Friend to the prince, to all beside the foe ;
Thence unavenged, abhorr'd, and vile, he fell.—
Would'st thou at once have Salviati slain,
And stop the comments of invidious tongues ?
Do what thou hast not heretofore attempted :
Feign love to him ; of pity thou dost rob him :
Raise him ; thou giv'st him a large field for error ;
Reward him ; he will be at once a traitor.
Beneath the semblance of just punishment
Thus cloak revenge ; and thus the prince obtains
His object, and the name of merciful.

Cos. Yes, one may reign with maxims such a
these ;
But thine, Diego, I esteem more regal.
He who esteems it possible to govern
Without deceit or terror is a fool.
Little a son's, and less a prince's thoughts,
Garcia, in thee I recognize. Speak'st thou
To Cosmo king, of Cosmo citizen ?
Would'st thou that on the throne I recollect
My cruel destiny ?—And I will do it,
By baffling the attacks of adverse fate.—
What strange perplexing jargon dost thou use ?
Thou callest terror, prudence ; abjectness,

Thou call'st humanity; and when I ask thee
How I may slay my mortal enemy,
Thou dost instruct me in the means to save him.

Di. Garcia, my younger brother, born to obey me,
It is no wonder should he not possess
A spirit correspondent to the throne;
And if he meek and private qualities
Profess or feign . . .

Gar. Virtue will always be
The same; for subjects and for kings the same.
• Question'd, I speak my thoughts: if such a soul
As thine be requisite to royalty,
I feel rejoiced that I expect no sceptre:
And if, as thou allegest, I was born
To obedience, I shall willingly obey,
But him alone who knoweth how to rule.

Cos. And I am he. And do thou recollect
That I know how to make myself obey'd:
Love and respect Diego as myself.—
I sought alone to know your sentiments,
And not to be advised. I saw, I knew,
I heard: enough.—To you, in words and deeds,
And even thoughts, I only now am law.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Diego, Piero, Garcia.

Gar. He from our deeds, far more than from our
words,
Can betwixt us discriminate. But yet,
I feel no grief that I have thus reveal'd
My judgment to my father: to my lips
Perchance the feelings which my heart contains

Should run less volubly ; but hitherto
I have not learn'd the talent to suppress,
And now I fear it never will be mine.

Di. What more doth Cosmo want? Within his
palace,
Among his sons, he finds a lofty censor
Who teaches him to reign.

Gar. What fearest thou?
Thou ever wilt be more acceptable
To him than me. To kings those are most welcome
Who best know how in their sword's edge to place
Infallibility.

Pi. Why should your rage,
Because ye differ in opinion, thus
Transgress all bounds? I too dissent from you,
But not, on this account, I love you less.
Brothers, and sons, and subjects of one father
Are not we all? Now go . . .

Gar. Let each of us
Indulge his own opinions: praise I seek not,
Nor cast I blame on others. Certainly,
I say, that we shall all the grievous load
Of public hate endure, if Cosmo chuse
To adopt deceit or force; from this will rise
The scorn of others, and from that the rage;
The vengeance from them both.

Di. Oh! wise and great
Assuredly thou art: may it please thee
To sit the moderator of our youth.—
Now, when wilt thou be silent? To thy sire
Thou wert already known; by him already,
In such esteem as thou deservest, held.
Go; if thou lovest darkness, live obscure;

But, since thou addest nothing to our brightness,
Make us not shadows of thy central gloom.

Gar. I call that infamy which thou call'st splendour.

But my discourse of that peace robs you not,
Which is not in yourselves : peace ill is bought
With universal cries ; ill with the blood
Of innocent citizens. An alien

Among you I am born ; but, since that I
Nathless *am* born among you, do not hope
That I shall ever hide from you the truth.

Pi. Thou art not, Garcia, to thy sire a foe :
Then why the friend to him that does offend him ?

Gar. The friend of justice, and of nothing else.
To you I thus address myself, but keep
Towards strangers an inflexible reserve.
I am willing to believe one supreme lord,
Where he doth keep himself within the pale
Of natural rights, doth best bested a people ;
But tyranny ? . . . It is my execration ;
And ah, my father doth too much affect it !
I ever was more tender of his honour
Than of his power : with a true love I love him,
And if o'er him my prayers will not avail,
They shall be all turn'd tyranny to lessen.

Di. And I (if I avail) will concentrate
My efforts all to give stability
To sacred power, which a rash rebel dares
To stigmatize unjustly.

Gar. The design
Is worthy of thyself.

Di. Dost thou insult me ?
Soon will I make thee . . .

Pi. Stop : replace thy sword.

Gar. Permit him, Piero, to display his sword.
He of himself would give a worthy sample,
A hopeful omen of his future reign,
His sword against his brother.

Pi. Ah, refrain . . .
And thou, be silent ! . . .

Di. Change thy style, or I . . .

Gar. I clearly see : anger in thee supplies
The place of reason. I am not incensed,
Whom reason only moves.

Di. Perhaps thou art
More backward in performance than in speech ;
Hence art thou not incensed.

Gar. Far more am I
To terror, than to action, indisposed.

Di. And who knows this ?

Gar. My sword.—And thou should'st know it . . .
If I were not thy brother.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Diego, Piero.

Di. Thou, my brother ?
We evermore were too dissimilar.

Pi. Appease thyself ; thy generous resentment
He merits not. Heard'st thou his insolence ?
Heard'st thou how proudly he exults in treason,
Much less then blushes at it ?

Di. Thou shalt see
One day, that he will be forced to renounce
His foolish pride : wait till I reign, and then . . .

Pi. To thee, 'tis true, the throne belongs by right .

But not by accident speaks Garcia thus.

Well know I, that my father hath repose'd

All his affection, all his hope in thee ;

To him art thou far dearer than the light :

But he descends towards the decline of life.

Thou know'st how love in aged hearts grows cold ;

How feebly hoary age defends itself

'Gainst female stratagems. This Garcia is

His mother's darling : she's possess'd by him :

And, thou know'st, loves us little . . .

Di. What fear I ?

The throne to me is due ; not e'en my sire

Could take it from me. Grant that he could do it,

I should suffice to re-obtain it. Well,

Our father knows us.

Pi. It is true ; but art . . .

Di. Art to the vile I give. I know that he

Is too dear to his mother. Equally

Were he to Cosmo, should I heed it ? no !

I fear not, hate not, envy not my brother.

Pi. But thou know'st not what culpable designs
Garcia hides in his heart . . .

Di. And do I ever

Investigate the purposes of others ?

Pi. But unknown to his father . . .

Di. And would I,

Think'st thou, repeat them to him ? That would be
In me far viler than in other men :

Since betwixt us harsh menaces have past,

Each word of mine would seem like craft or ven-
geance.

I know my father, and am well aware

How little he is able to subdue

The first assaults of rage ; to fatal proof
 'Twere better not to bring him. If my brother,
 Deteriorates spontaneously, let him
 Alone abide the consequence of this.
 But if he any more attempts to offend me,
 I hope, he cannot say, that for his wrongs
 I've sought redress from any but himself.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cosmo, Eleonora.

Cos. No, I am not mistaken ; no : a son
 More worthy than Diego we possess not ;
 The honour of the throne, his father's safety,
 The universal peace, he has at heart.
 I had indubitable proofs of this
 From his own lips a little while ago.

Ele. Then hast thou never in my Garcia found
 Love, judgment, gentleness of character,
 And pliancy of heart ?

Cos. What words are these ?
 How dost thou designate that rebel spirit ?
 Of all my sons, he is the only one
 Unworthy of the name. What do I say,
 Among my sons ? Far, far more than by him,
 By every other am I loved and revered.
 A serpent, who on me turns all his rage,
 And his dire poison, in my breast I cherish.
 How difficultly, when to him I listen'd,
 Did I restrain my rage ! Surmise is now
 Matured to certainty : and Garcia is . . .

Ele. What has he done? What has he said? In
what
Offended thee? Alas . . .

Cos. What has he said?
Whilst of a mortal foe I plan the death,
He dares to counsel me to pardon him.
Thence, much as I abhor him, he abhors me.
The guilty Salviati? Thence my foes
Are not his foes?

Ele. And is not every man
Thy subject that dwells here? If this, or that,
It pleaseth thee to slay, dost thou not do it?
'Tis in a son a venial offence
To supplicate his sire to be less cruel.
'Tis true, that neither Piero nor Diego
From bloodshed dared dissuade thee: Garcia dared.
What doth this indicate, except that he
Is more benignant, and for human blood
Pants not?

Cos. This overweening, ill-placed love,
More than it ought to do, thy judgment blinds.
Thou'st made an idol to thyself in Garcia;
Save him thou lovest, and thou seest nothing:
That which I call a crime, dar'st thou in him
Call virtue?—

This altercation is not new betwixt us,
But every day it more displeases me.
And thou wilt make an effort to myself
Most acceptable, if within thy heart
Thou hide a love so partial and unjust.

Ele. An unjust love? Ah! if there be who thus
Can prove it to me, I at once will change it.
Not on the words, but actions of my sons,

My observation has been fix'd.

Cos. So be it ;
 If then thou wilt, in spite of me, let him
 Be dear to thee ; so that I never more
 Hear thee excuse his failings. In my palace,
 The first and only virtue is to please me :
 This virtue hitherto I see not in him :
 It doth belong to thee to teach him this ;
 To thee, . . . if thou sincerely lovest him.

Ele. And hath not Garcia always bent his brow
 To thy behests ?

Cos. What merit hath obedience ?
 And this sufficeth it ? And not to do it,
 Who now would have the hardihood ?—He ought
 To speak not only as I speak, but ought
 To think e'en as I think : he who has not
 A nature like to mine, should change it : yes :
 Not simulate, but change it. Of my race,
 And of my realm, I am the head ; the soul
 Am I, with which each living creature here
 Is animated.—Nor, on guilty Garcia,
 Had he not been my son, had I bestow'd
 Even a warning ere I punish'd him.
 Hence is his crime assuredly augmented ;
 But yet once more, or ere his chastisement,
 Once only will I make him hear a voice,
 That from perdition's path may rescue him.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Cosmo, Eleonora, Piero.

Pi. Father, most urgent business brings me to
 thee ;

With thee I would confer at leisure.

Cos. Oh!

What strange disturbance on thy face I read!

Speak; what hath happen'd? say.

Pi. I cannot speak it.

Except to thee alone.

Ele. What can a son

Have of mysterious for a father's ears,

Thus from a mother carefully conceal'd?

Cos. I am a father; but at the same time

I am a prince; nor hast thou hitherto,

Lady, with me my public burthens shared;

Nor wilt thou share them, if, as I suspect...

Ele. Thou dost suspect the truth. Scarcely had I

The native shores of my Sebetus quitted,

Than I, become the sharer of thy fate,

All my attachments, all my objects bounded,

Within these royal walls. In me thou gained'st

A consort, and a handmaid, nothing more.

Clearly I saw my lord thought every proof

Of love was centred in a blind obedience.

Hence always I obey'd; this thou know'st well;

Often in tones of gratitude hast thou

Praised me for this. Would'st thou remain alone?

I leave thee: and already I infer

From him who tells it, what this secret is:

And I know why I only should not hear it.

But I wish not to hear Piero's tongue,

Possessing such alacrity to injure:

If only to the detriment of strangers

It were exerted, I should not at least

Then tremble at it, as I tremble now.

• I, of his well-known arts, am doubtlessly

A most unwelcome witness.

Pi. 'Thou hast placed
All thy maternal fondness on one son;
Hence are the others guilty; and, meanwhile,
Hence do I suffer heavy punishment;
And, indeed, may it fall alone on me!
My tongue is evermore prepared to injure?
This thy beloved son says so, to whom
I bear no hatred, though I envy him:
Let him confess, if, or in words or deeds,
I ever injured him.—A horrid stain
Thou fixest on me, mother: yet should I,
If any other than my mother fix'd it,
Be more afflicted; or if any one
Heard it, besides my father and my lord,
'To me imputed. But I know my duty;
I ought to suffer and to hold my peace;
I suffer, and am silent.

Cos. Lady, would'st thou,
With manners such as these, in tumult throw
Our palace?

Ele. Ah, that others would not do it!
And hath not an abominable pest
Already fix'd its residence among us?
I yield my place: and may I never know,
And never thou believe, his odious secrets.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Cosmo, Piero.

Cl. Piero, speak.

Pi. My mother's prophecies
In part are true. An execrable pest

Rises among us.

Cos. Where I reign, no' pest
Exists that can mature ; e'en from the roots
It shall be torn up : speak.

Pi. I know full well
That all depends on thee : of every wound
Thou art the sovereign healer ; hence I seek
In thee alone a speedy remedy.—

• Erewhile there rose, 'twixt Garcia and Diego,
A war of words : their fury with great pains
I check'd ; but certainly 'tis not extinguish'd.
Inflamed, and fierce, Garcia went out : with prayers,
Mingled with force, Diego I restrain'd :
The aggressor he will never be, no never ;
But, from the other, if one look escape,
One word, one gesture to provoke him, heavens !
I tremble to reflect on what may follow.

Cos. Perpetual discord ; I already knew it :
But what new provocation hath impell'd them
To yield to such ungovernable rage ?

Pi. When thou erewhile didst quit us, we re-
main'd

In earnest conference. Diego, fired
In words as well as deeds with noble ardour,
With that imposing frankness he possesses,
Openly blamed his brother Garcia,
(And blamed, methinks, not wrongfully,) that he,
Alone, dared in thy presence to defend
The guilty cause of Salviati. Pierced
E'en to his inmost heart (for the rebuke
Was too well founded,) Garcia had recourse
To threats against his brother : and had he
Outrag'd Diego only ! . . . but to thee

I ought not to repeat that which escaped,
 While hot with passion, from his breast : and perhaps
 He thought it not ; anger sometimes excites
 To utter that which is not. And to me,
 While I essay'd to reconcile them both,
 He darted pungent and injurious words :
 But this imports not.—'Tis expedient now,
 That he should hear the thunder of thy voice,
 So that this contest gain no further strength.

Cos. There is no doubt ; all things convince me
 of it :

Garcia, that impious son, betrays his sire,
 His lord, his honour, and himself, at once.
 He would, by this aggression on Diego,
 Obliquely wound his father : he assumes
 Blind confidence from blind maternal love ;
 And to the highest pitch audacity
 In him is risen. Erewhile, I wish'd to hear
 If he would dare deliberately disclose
 The vile and guilty friendship in my presence
 That he hath long encouraged in his heart :
 And it is not to me, oh no ! unknown,
 As much as witlessly he thinks it is.

Pi. Thou, then, indeed dost know it, that he is
 Clandestinely of Salviati ?

Cos. Yes ;

I know it ; thoroughly convinced . . .

Pi. Himself,

Against his will . . .

Cos. And why have ye conceal'd
 It hitherto from me ?

Pi. He is our brother . . .

Cos. And am not I the father of you all ?

Pi. I hoped, indeed, that to the path of duty
 He would return; and still I dare to hope it.
 Still in that unripe age are we, thou seest,
 When man is most apt to be led astray.
 Each of us might, caught in such snares, become
 Guilty of similar failings.

Cos. Ah ! no snares
 Could ever make you traitors : for ye are, ...
 Diego, and thyself . . .

Pi. Diego never ;
 I hope so of myself ; and every man
 Affirms it of himself while he is sane.
 But who can answer for the consequence,
 If love, the enemy of reason, rule him ?

Cos. What say'st thou ? Love !

Pi. If thou reflect on this,
 Less heinous will his fault appear to thee.
Cos. Love, say'st thou ? Love for whom ?

Pi. Thou know'st it, father.

Cos. I know that he's a traitor ; that he oft
 Dares meet in secret interview, at night,
 With Salviati in my palace, here,
 But that love prompted him, I never knew :
 What may this love be ? Speak.

Pi. Ah wretched me ! . . .
 I would excuse him, and I have accused him.

Cos. Speak : I command thee ; and hide nothing
 from me,

Or I . . .

Pi. Ah ! father, pardon him, I pray,
 This youthful indiscretion, and ascribe
 Nothing that he does to a will depraved.
 Love only makes him seem a traitor. He

Loves guilty Salviati's guiltless daughter :
 The gentle Julia, whom thou hast perchance
 Retain'd a hostage for her father's faith,
 Among th' illustrious damsels in thy court ;
 Julia he loves ; she, ere scarce seen, inflamed him.
 He loves her secretly ; and, loved again,
 He lives in sweet though ineffectual hope.
 Now that the father of a maid beloved
 Should not seem guilty to her paramour,
 Why should this seem so wonderful to thee ?

Cos. All men then know the errors of my sons
 More than myself ? All men excuse them ? hide
 them ?

His partial mother incontestably
 Is privy also to this guilty secret ;
 And seconds it perchance . . .

Pi. In truth, I think not . . .
 But yet, who knows . . .

Cos. This simulated love
 What can it be, except a specious veil
 For future treasons ? Can my son be dear
 To Julia for his own sake ? Is she not
 The daughter of my foe ? And hath she not,
 E'en with her milk, imbibed hatred for me,
 And for my blood ? Deep treasons are conceal'd
 Beneath this love : the daughter, doubtlessly, . .
 Is made an instrument of his revenge
 By the shrewd father ; I am not mistaken.
 And my own son ? . . .

Pi. Perchance thou construest well
 Their secret schemes : but think it not of Garcia :
 A fervid love assuredly excites him ;
 And the blind guide doth often not conduct

To a good path : perchapce he hēnce has err'd.
Now that thou know'st the whole do thou restrain
him,

But with a gentle rein : do not so act,
That I with reason may regret to-day
That I've betray'd, although by chance I did it,
His jealous amorous secret. It is true,
He never told it to me ; but he is
Reserved to all, and most so to his brothers :
But yet I knew it.—Now, since I have said it,
Turn it to his advantage. Wean him, father,
From this disgraceful fondness ; and at once
Appease his unjust rage against his brothers.

Cos. Thou hast done well to speak : a son and
subject
It was thy duty ; I shall seek to know
More of this matter.—But Diego comes.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Diego, Cosmo, Piero.

Cos. My son, what would'st thou ? Justice ? Thou
shalt have it.

Di. Father, what ails thee ? On thy austere brow
Sits dark displeasure. Perhaps our strife hath wrought
Disturbance in thee ? It had been, Piero,
Better indeed for us to have hid it from him :
And what ? Fear'st thou that for my brother's insult
Anger in me all limits would transgress ?
Ah, let my father think no more of it ;
Nor let it raise in him resentful feelings.
Esteem me not offended ; I alone
Pity th' offender : this is my revenge.

Cos. Oh, thou art worthy of a better brother
 Than Garcia is ! Fraternal injuries
 Thou dost endure ; and it becomes thee well :
 But that he has infringed my laws, that he
 Erewhile contended with thee, this is not
 The first sole cause of my profound displeasure :
 His turbulence, I clearly see, springs not
 From the impetuosity of youth ;
 'Tis the worse fruit of a malignant heart :
 I am compell'd e'en to the fountain head
 Of the mortiferous pestilence to go ;
 I am compell'd t' investigate the whole,
 The whole to hear. Imperiously it behoves me
 To know the deeds, th' affections, and the words,
 The enterprises, e'en the secret thoughts,
 Of one, a royal youth, who, more than others,
 Has power to injure, and may fear it less.

Di. Yet do not now ascribe to guilt in him,
 I pray thee, that which erewhile, when incensed,
 He said to me.

Pi. Thou seest clearly, father,
 If Garcia had a corresponding soul,
 Peace would be permanent betwixt them both ;
 Nor doth Diego feign . . .

Di. Nor hitherto
 Have I suspected that my brother feign'd,
 Or was malignant. No, my father, no ;
 Although he differ from me, I perceive
 The seeds of virtue in him ; I esteem him
 A little from the path of rectitude
 Unconsciously misled ; he cherishes
 Private affections in his princely nature ;
 Hence are those phrases which appear so strange ;

Hence he so frequently dissents from us ;
 And hence th' injurious lofty pomp with which
 He preaches to us his ascetic virtues.
 I first, inflamed with anger, in thy presence,
 Calling him hypocritical and false,
 Presumed to assault him : to a lofty heart
 Th' indignity was insupportable ;
 And scarcely was in me my wrath appeased,
 Ere I repented of it. I come here,
 In the first place, expressly to recant ;
 And inasmuch as my officiousness
 May have excited prejudice in thee
 Against thy son, to abrogate at once
 Impressions sinister, as they are false."

Cos. Garcia assuredly is less a traitor,
 Than thou magnanimous.

Di. We are thy sons . . .

Cos. Thou art indeed : Piero and thyself.

Pi. At least, I prize myself in thinking so.

Di. Ah ! do not deem thy other son yet lost :
 I do beseech thee, to thyself, and us,
 Reclaim him, father ; but with gentle treatment.
 Advice, far more than force, will operate
 On his tenacious heart ; and never shew him
 That, less than us, thou lovest him.

Cos. My sons,
 Enough, enough. Withdraw : I will indulge you.
 Ere long to me, Piero, thou send here
 Thy brother Garcia ; I will speak to him.
 Nor do I less commend in thee, Piero,
 The strict solicitude, than in Diego
 The sublime magnanimity of heart.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Cosmo.

Cos. Oh worthy pair of sons!—What star of mine
 Will join'to you a third with such deserts?
 Though I deem'd Garcia guilty, I ne'er deem'd
 His guilt was so atrocious. But, methinks,
 With what impression ought I to behold
 Diego, who, though destined to command,
 Solicits pardon for received offences.
 It grieves me to be forced to praise in him
 That with my tongue, which in my heart I blame.
 But yet he is a novice in the arts
 Of government; in time he'll be more wise.
 I see within him all the qualities
 That form a perfect prince. I must instruct him,
 By my example, that, to govern well,
 The less we should forgive, e'en as the ties
 Of blood are more implicit, and the more
 Th' offender to the offended is allied.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cosmo, Garcia.

Gar. See me, oh father, at thy call.—Thy words,
 If it be lawful to anticipate
 With prompt and humble filial respect,
 I now, by first accusing my own fault,
 Can somewhat mitigate thy just displeasure,
 And my own shame. Oh, could I thus appear

A little less unworthy in thy eyes
 Of pardon! nought else in the world I wish.
 Stung by Diego, I insulted him;
 I do regret this deeply: nor could'st thou
 A punishment inflict that might compare
 With my repentance. Dearer to thyself
 Older than I, and by long habitude
 Of all my actions the appointed censor,
 Diego should find nothing else in me
 But full obsequious silence, patience, peace.

Cos. What I would say to thee, thou hast in part
 Forestall'd; but not the whole. It pleases me
 To hear that from thy breast all hate is banish'd;
 Whate'er may be its cause, I feel no wrath
 Paternal, that subsides not at thy words.
 I never yet have entertain'd a doubt
 But that the rage would be no sooner cool'd,
 Which to exasperating words impell'd you,
 Than that both instantly would come to me
 To make atonement. Now there doth arise,
 T' obliterate the first, betwixt you both
 The nobler strife of self-di-paragement;
 Whence I absolve you both, and neither deem
 Guilty in this.—Further I now would say.—
 Within my mind have I revolved thy counsel,
 Which, as inopportune and indiscreet,
 I blamed this morning. Now thou art convinced
 That the first judgment is not always best:
 E'en in proportion as I meditate,
 'Mid various other sentiments, on thine,
 Less they displease me. Not that I believe
 That I should blindly trust in Salvati;
 Too much he hates me: but he also fears,

And fears effectively. Had I the power
 To introduce betwixt our mutual hate
 A valid obstacle, or to devise
 Such ties as might reciprocally join us
 In firm alliance, in one word a means
 Whence common interests might league us both,
 And make us both secure, I might perchance
 Not only wean my heart from schemes of blood,
 But further, with conciliatory thoughts
 Dispose it to relent . . .

Gar. What do I hear?

Can this be true, my father? What a tide
 Of lofty transport inundates my breast!
 Not that I dare found the presumptuous hope
 On my opinions, that I can instruct
 My sovereign lord; but real joy I feel
 To be convinced, that, to obtain his ends,
 My father rather chuses to use means
 Of gentleness, than menaces and blood.
 Centred is all authority in him
 Who sits upon the throne; he, at his will,
 Can mitigate, or strengthen fear or hate,
 In all his vassals.—Could he utterly
 Eradicate them from the hearts of others,
 And from his own!—But niggard fate denies
 Such blest exemption to the breasts of monarchs.

Cos. But what would be the consequence, if I
 With too great mildness should reproach myself?

Gar. Was a good heart e'er self-reproach'd for
 this?

Nor should'st thou fear that injury to thee
 Can thence result. The customary hate
 Of those by royal prejudice pursued,

To Salviani's elevated soul
 Is surely unknown. He knows full well
 That he has forfeited thy love for ever :
 He hath no hope, nor hath he any fear,
 To check his projects : for himself he fears not ;
 He when he lost thy favour, lost his all.
 Yet, notwithstanding this, he doth propose
 To all his deeds, one uniform condition,
 How he may please thee best ; and thou by means
 Direct canst never lose him, if thou dost not
 Take indirect ones to indulge thy rancour.

Cos. There are then who deceive me ? . . . Oh sad
 lot

Of those who are most powerful ! How ferocious
 Have others represented him to me !
 Here, all are emulously fraudulent ;
 And each one to his private projects makes
 My power subservient . . .

Gar. It is known to all
 That Salviani's father was thy foe :
 Hence each one emulously paints his son
 To thee an infamous, perfidious rebel . . .

Cos. Ah, thou dost speak too truly ! Ill a prince,
 If others penetrate his heart, can know
 The hearts of other men.—But tell me further :
 Whence dost thou now so accurately know
 What are his dispositions ? Although he
 Has followed me to Pisa, in my court
 Him have I never seen. What do I say,
 In court ? All human converse he avoids,
 And drags on such a solitary life,
 That one would say, that life in secret broods
 O'er heavy incommunicable thoughts ;

And that of every man he is mistrustful.

Gar. If it were lawful, I would say . . .

Cos. Speak on :

The truth is pleasing to me ; I delight
To hear thee.

Gar. In thy footsteps here he came.
But only to remove from thee all doubt
Of his fidelity : for in the midst
Of factious spirits, with which Florence teems,
Thou always would'st have held that faith precarious.
With him sometimes I have had interviews ;
This I deny not : ah, hadst thou but heard him !
His heart surcharged with bitterness and anguish,
With how much reverence, and with how much fear,
He, with subdued resentment, mourn'd thy error ;
And never thee, but thy perfidious friends,
The persevering foes to truth alone
He blamed for this ; and even deems not thine
Thy own suspicions . . .

Cos. But that thou'rt my son
He knows : how tell thee ? . . .

Gar. Perhaps he thinks me
Of pity capable . . .

Cos. I understand :
Thy influence with me in his favour . . .

Gar. He
Knows that my words on thee are ineffectual . . .

Cos. Thou hast perchance divulged to him thy
secrets :—

Thou always sad ; always, like him, alone :—
Perhaps common sympathies unite you both.
He pitying thy wrongs, as thou pitiest him,
Without exception may not hate my blood ?

He hears thee, speaks to thee? far different . . .

Gar. Ah different, yes, from that which fame reports him.

Thou dost inspire me with a hardihood

Which I had never of myself assumed.

Know, that thy dearest friend (chuse whom thou wilt

'Mong those whom thou with honours and with gold
Hast laden, I will not say surfeited,)

I swear, is less devoted to thy service,

And loves thee less, and less would risk for thee,

Than that degraded, obscure Salviati,

Assured in heart of his own innocence,

Which, to increase the poignance of his woes,

He's not allow'd to prove.—If in contempt

He such is found, reflect what he would be

If worthily esteem'd.

Cos. . . . Truly this man

Hath roused a tender interest in thy heart :

Thy words are strong, yet hence I blame thee not.

Since thou assertest it, he must at least

Have some good qualities : but speak ; and speak

The truth ; thou know'st not how to lie already ?

Now do his virtues only thus excite

Thee to commend him ?

Gar. Ah ! since thou dost think

I know not how to lie, I will not now

E'en partially divulge to thee the truth.

Love also rouses me : I burn for Julia ;

And hence have double pity for the father.

Cos. And he knows this ?

Gar. I tell it him.

Cos. He aids thee ?

Gar. No, he condemns it : I condemn it also. /
Nay, what dost thou suppose me ?

Cos. Circumspect,
But not in time.

Gar. Love doth not blind me, no ;
Nor doth it rob me of integrity.
I speak to thee in praise of Salvati,
Since in subservience to his principles
He holds all selfish interests : otherwise
I would have represented him to thee,
If I had found him otherwise ; were he
As he is adverse, to my love propitious.
I have not learn'd to varnish o'er the truth ;
Nor do I even with a latent hope
Foster the passion that consumes my vitals :
Which neither I will nourish in my heart,
Nor can I e'er extinguish it. I know
That thy inflexible and austere will
From Julia separates me eternally.
Pity from thee I do not ask : too well
I know, for this immitigable wound
I have no other remedy than death !
I have entreated for her innocent father,
For such I know he is ; but were he not,
Love would ne'er lead me to betray my own.

Cos. Perfidious, I would hear from thy own lips
The whole ; but thou speak'st not the whole to me.
Thy love for Julia is thy least offence.

Gar. Oh Heaven ! What do I hear ? Must I ne'er
deem

Goodness in thee sincere ?

Cos. Thou never should'st,
Thinking of thee, no never !—Fully thou

Dost know thy heart, thou traitor.—I erewhile
Have sought the means, whence I might take away
That miscreant from my eyes : fortune, behold,
Brings them to me ; and indicates at once
The instrument. Is it thy wish to clear
Thyself of turpitude in my opinion ?
Would'st thou that I should deem love thy sole
crime ?

Little of this declining day remains :
At the first gathering of the shades of night,
Let guilty *Salviati* come unknown,
Clandestinely, within my palace walls,
As heretofore he has been wont to come ;
And thou invite him ; and do thou conduct him
To the accustom'd haunt, in which so oft
He has conversed with thee : and there do thou
(Woe fall on thee if thou refuse me this !)
Plunge in his breast this sword.

Gar. Oh Heaven !

Cos. Be silent.

Thou hast betray'd thy sire, thy lord, thyself :
This is th' atonement. What ? when I command
Dar'st thou resist ?

Gar. And dost thou stand in need
Of other hands more infamous for this ?

Cos. I have selected thine : let that suffice.

Gar. I will first perish.

Cos. Say not so ; my hand
Grasps the sure earnest of thy prompt obedience.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Garcia.

Gar. "What looks ! . . . Alas . . . Oh father, hear . . .
 ' Oh words !

But, of what earnest speaks he ? Through each vein
 I feel an unaccustom'd chillness creep.

Perhaps he alludes to Julia ? . . . Yes . . . what pledge
 Can vie with her ? Oh Heaven ! . . . What can I do ? . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Eleonora, Garcia.

Ele. Son, whither dost thou go ? Ah stay ; to me
 Interpret the mysterious words of Cosmo.

Hither he hath dispatch'd me to assist thee :

Wherefore ? Say what has happen'd ? . . .

Gar. Oh, my mother ! . . .

What did he say to thee ?

Ele. " Go ; give advice

" To thy beloved Garcia, now he needs thee :

" And make him recollect."—Nor added more ;

But with a countenance more discomposed

' Than ever I beheld in him, pass'd on.

Now speak ; delay not ; what has happen'd ?

Gar. Mother,

Know'st thou this sword ?

Ele. I, at thy father's side,

Have always seen it hang : and what of this ?

Gar. This is an instrument of government :

Ah, were it Cosmo's only ! ' Ne'er should

' Contaminate with it my innocent hand !

But to this right-hand my unnatural father
Himself consign'd it, and insists that I
Plunge it by stealth in Salvati's breast.

Ele. What do I hear?... Oh Heaven!... But
whence to thee

Commits he such a terrible revenge?

Gar. He chuses me, only because I feel
Pity for Salvati; and because
I am not yet contaminate with blood;
Because the daughter, the unhappy daughter,
Of that unhappy father, I adore.

Ele. What say'st thou? Julia!

Gar. I love Julia; yes;
And indiscreetly I myself declared
That love to Cosmo: hence in him arose
Th' unnatural wish, worthy of him alone,
To make the father of the maid beloved
Die by the lover's hands. Time serves not now
To say to thee how I was first enthrall'd
By so much beauty join'd to so much virtue;
Nor, if I told it, would'st thou blame it, mother;
Now I alone assure thee that I love her,
And that I will far sooner sacrifice
My own life than her father's.

Ele. Ah!... my son!...

Alas!... what say'st thou?... and what shall I do?
Oh fatal love!... Although I love thee far,
Far more than aught besides, I cannot praise it.

Gar. Julia is ever at thy side, oh mother;
Thou knowest well, and equally dost prize
Her rare accomplishments; and thou dost love her
More than all other dainties of thy court:
Thence thou may'st well infer that I deserve

At least to be excused, if not commended.
 But, if thou rather wilt, condemn me : never
 Have I displeased thee, mother : I have held
 Thy smallest wish inviolably sacred.
 And I, at least, if I cannot root out
 This love, can moderate its ecstasies.
 I only ask of thee that thou would'st save
 That heavenly and defenceless innocence,
 From Cosmo's pitiless and fatal grasp.
 I wish to save her, not to make her mine.
 Incensed, and loading me with frantic threats,
 Cosmo departed hence : perchance one crime
 Will not suffice to his ferocious heart ;
 Perhaps Julia too . . . oh Heaven ! . . . Ah, mother,
 fly ;

If I was ever dear to thee, go now,
 Watch o'er my love. Who knows ? . . .

Elc. Thy love excites
 In thee immoderate fear . . .

Gar. All may be fear'd
 From Cosmo's deadly rage : thou yet hast time ;
 Thou hast the remedy ; it now behoves thee
 His fury to delude ; 'twere vain to sooth him.
 As best it may be done, deliver Julia ;
 And meanwhile feign that I am now almost
 Prepared t' obey : time, and nought else, I ask .
 In fine, thou art a mother ; and the love
 Thou bear'st thy son shall animate thy heart.
 Thou oughtest from so horrible a crime
 To exempt a son ; thou oughtest to deliver
 From unjust violence an innocent man.
 Thou see'st me now humble myself in tears,
 And supplicate while yet a hope remains :

Woe, if my father goad me to revenge;
 Woe, if he dare to wreak his rage on her
 In whom alone I live! Rivers of blood
 Shall be effused to inundate the palace;
 And this my arm shall shed it. Then no more
 Shall I hear reason; then no more shall deem
 Myself a son.

Ele. Ah calm thyself; what say'st thou?
 Thou seest things that are not: far from thee
 Be e'en the thought of such extravagance...

Gar. Do thou, oh mother, then anticipate
 That which thou canst not afterwards prevent.
 From this severe extremity, to which
 I'm driven by my father, do thou find
 Some method of escape for me, that I
 Be not a traitor.

Ele. Yes, son, yes; but calm
 Thy irritated soul: to him I fly.
 Ah may I change his horrible resolve!
 Julia I will at least in safety place,
 To give thee peace. Meanwhile I interdict
 Thee from attempting aught till I return.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Garcia.

Gar. If Julia is not safe, I will do nothing.—
 Alas! what do I hope? that to cheat Cosmo
 My mother may avail, who bears the marks
 Of apprehension in her every look?
 Oh, from what father am I sprung! Alike
 Crafty and cruel, can he be deceived?
 Much less be moved to pity... Yet he will not

Have wreaked his rage upon the timid maid,
 Ere he has learn'd that I refuse to strike
 Th' atrocious blow . . . Shall I consent to it? . . .

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Piero, Garcia.

Pi. Brother, what hast thou done? Alas! . . .

Gar. What ails thee?

Pi. In truth I now do pity thee sincerely.

Gar. Now? . . . What has happened? . . .

Pi. Oh unhappy brother!

Cosmo doth threaten thee, and darkly frowns,
 Pronouncing thee a traitor.

Gar. Such I am not.

Pi. But yet my father is exasperate
 Beyond all bounds. He hath already summon'd
 Into his presence Salviati's daughter,
 Laden with heavy and opprobrious chains.

Gar. Oh Heaven! . . . Vile tyrant . . . I will fly . . .

Pi. Ah! . . . Where?

Gar. To drag her from unworthy chains.

Pi. Thou may'st

Drag her to horrid death by thy imprudence.
 Under the penalty of death he gave her
 Into the custody of cruel Geri.
 If he, by whomsoever it may be,
 Perceives the smallest action in her favour,
 Geri is bidden instantly to slay her
 With his own hands . . .

Gar. We soon shall see . . .

Pi. Ah stop! . . .
 What would'st thou do?

Perhaps she too...

Gar. Oh Heaven!

Pi. But why perhaps?

It is too sure! If thou refuse t' obey,
Father and daughter he will immolate.

Gar. Thou mak'st me shudder with excess of
horror.

But how can I destroy, and treacherously,
A just and innocent man? Hither entice
At night, and under the flagitious mask
Of simulated amity, a friend,
The father of the lady I adore?...

Pi. Ah! surely such extremity as thine
Was never heard before; nor are there minds
So firm, as not to shrink from such a trial.
But yet what would'st thou? What else canst thou
do?

Thou only canst accumulate crime on crime.
Let one alone expire; that were the best...

Gar. And shall I live?...

Pi. Hear me. He is the culprit
Who forces thee to such a crime, not thou.—
But yet I can in part lessen for thee
The horror of this stratagem, if thou
Permittest that the messenger be sent
By me to Salviati in thy name.
Resolve; resolve at once; and oh! reflect
In what unutterable agony
Thy Julia languishes...

Gar. Beloved Julia!...

And shall I kill thy father? ... No, I cannot ...
Yet, if I slay not him, I murder thee ...
For I can neither perish nor avenge thee,

And scarcely can I save thee!—But I ought,
 Ere I resolve, once more to hear my mother :
 Perchance my grief, my rage, my desperate love,
 May point another path.*

Pi. Ah no ! . . .

Gar. But yet
 If 'tis my fate, that I this horrid crime . . .
 Hear me : if I return not in an hour
 Hither to thee, it is indeed too true
 That I was forced to chuse to immolate
 The father of my Julia.—Then I leave
 To thee, since thou wilt have it so, the task
 To send the impious messenger of death.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Piero, Diego.

Di. Say, what does Garcia in his thoughts revolve ?

For like a man whose reason is bereft
 I saw him come, and go, and come again.

Pi. Dost thou not know that he . . .

Di. What should I know
 Of him ? Thou seest that from the woodland chace
 Weary and breathless I return. I know
 That I bring back a plenteous spoil ; nought else.
 But as an arrow darting silently
 And swiftly by me, Garcia towards me cast
 Inflamed and furious looks. Say, what new rage
 Invades his heart ?

Pi. Ah ! 'tis not new : for he

Always avoids, blames, envies, even scorns thee,
 Whenever he can do it. Perhaps to see thee
 Of all thy regal ornaments despoil'd,
 As now thou art ; divested of thy sword ;
 And in thy aspect rather like to one
 That dwells in forests than a monarch's son,
 Perhaps this excited him to such a mute,
 Though supercilious comment Evermore
 That which he does not, he condemns in others.

Di. 'Tis a propensity, methinks, more royal
 To harass wild beasts in th' adventurous chase,
 Than evermore immured 'mid ponderous volumes,
 Wrapt in soft indolence, to learn to fear.
 His supercilious looks excite my pity.
 But whither goes he in such wond'rous haste ?

Pi. Great projects he revolves. His father now
 He seeks in haste, now to his mother flies,
 And thus employ'd, with zealous speed improves
 The lucky interval Diego absent,
 And I excluded from these interviews ;
 Thou seest the opportunity for intrigue
 Is too inviting to be overlook'd.
 I know no further : but the guilty friendship
 Of Garcia and Salviati, once
 Call'd treason, now is call'd a slight imprudence :
 And that so oft repeated prate with thee,
 Which once was insolence, with other terms
 Is designated now a youthful fire :
 And that contempt for individual power
 Which he professes openly, I hear
 Now call'd a thoughtless eccentricity.
 Just indignation every day I see
 Arise in Cosmo ; but the senile flame

By female artifice is soon extinguish'd.
 In short, this morning Garcia heard himself
 Pronounced a traitor ; and this very day
 (Or ere 'tis closed) he hears himself from all
 Exculpated, defended, and exalted ;
 And even yet, perchance, he may behold
 Himself rewarded.

Di. What indeed does that
 Import to us ? Shall I afflict myself
 That Garcia gains once more my father's favour ?
 Perhaps this alone may lead him to reform ?

Pi. And am I more invidious than thyself
 Of other men's advantages ? But yet
 Th' imposture grieves me, and e'en more than this
 The fatal and inevitable ruin
 Threatening our race, our father, and thyself.

Di. My father ? and myself ? Say, what would
 Garcia ?

What can he ?

Pi. He would reign : and may indeed,
 If thou art silent.

Di. Reign ? . . . But have I not
 A sword ?

Pi. Far different arms he wields. Erewhile,
 A transient wrath against himself inflamed thee ;
 Thou know'st not how to hate, or recollect
 The injuries of others : but, if they
 Cherish them in the bottom of their hearts ;
 If black and fervid anger rankle there,
 Ready at every instant to explode . . .

Di. But th' impious contest Cosmo hath not yet
 Consign'd to deep oblivion ? . . .

Pi. So I deem ;

But Garcia deems otherwise.

Di. But thou,
Thou seem'st to come to me to stir up strife.
How can my brother injure me?

Pi. Indeed,
I am the brand of discord 'twixt you both :
Do thou, abandoning thy judgment, stand
Securely in thy valour ; I, like thee,
Might be secure, if I did love thee less.
Attribute it to thy propitious fate
That I discover'd his design : in time.
Now at once thy security and ours
Compel me to develope them to thee :
For, had I wish'd t' excite disturbances,
I had divulged them only to my father :
But yet I will go there, if thou refuse
To hear me.

Di. What has happen'd then ? Relate.

Pi. The silent night with more than usual gloom
Already is advanced. Within the grot
Which terminates the hollow avenue,
Embower'd in shade of lofty cypresses,
Thither doth Salviati now repair,
By Garcia bidden, to a guilty council :
Perchance already he is hidden there,
And every moment there expects his friend.
There they've agreed upon to fix the means
Of final vengeance. I have learn'd the whole
From him who was their chosen messenger.
Prayers, menaces, and vigilant espial,
Much art and bribes, have now disclosed to me
The horrible mystery : in short . . . But what
Do I behold ? For once at least I see

Amazement stamp'd on thy intrepid face ! . . .
 Yet that which I affirm to thee is little :
 Do thou be irrefragably convinced
 With thy own ears ; and be thy eyes alone
 The witnesses of my veracity.

Di. But what a miscreant is he then ! ' The day.
 The very day on which my father pardons
 His past offences, new ones he projects.—
 He runs to certain ruin.

Pi. But to it
 He first goads us. Thou know'st by Salvati
 Thou art not less detested than thy father.
 Scarcely will Garcia have divulged to him
 That thou advis'dst Cosmo first to slay him,
 Than he . . . I tremble to express it . . . Both
 Are madden'd with resentment . artifice
 To malice will be join'd ; for stratagems
 The time is opportune : . . . and wilt thou be
 Neglectful ? Be so then ; I fly to Cosmo,
 Come what come may.—The method I devise
 To obviate more mischief, to procure
 Deliverance for us all ; and thou dost spurn it.
 My father then shall be resorted to :
 And he, the witness of their trait'rous plot,
 With me shall go to them.

—*Di.* Ah no ! desist :
 Think that a man can never be the accuser
 Who holds himself not viler than the accused.
 By what means would'st thou that I thwart the traitor
 Speak ; I will do it.

Pi. Thou should'st first hear all :
 'Tis easy from a detected stratagem
 To extricate oneself : thou may'st alone,

Without the³ interposition of thy father,
When thou hast once convicted him of treason,
Keep, with thy valour, Garcia at bay;
Inspire his heart with salutary fear;
And even yet to duty's path restore him.—
Ah go! already is the hour arrived:
Now hide thyself within the gloomy grot;
And there wilt thou hear unexpected things.

Di. Thou dost compel me to it; and I yield,
Although against my will, that to this place
My father may not be enticed by thee:
He would inflict a too severe revenge.

Pi. Ah yes! I also tremble at the thought:
Yet 'tis our duty to anticipate
The ill designs of others... But methinks...
I hear a noise... it is himself... step softly...
'Tis Garcia.—Come, enter unseen; make haste.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Piero.

Pi. At length he's safely lodged.—I'll hide myself;
And listen to discover if I can
Whether this other doth maintain his purpose.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Garcia.

Ga \ Alas! who doth impel my footsteps here?
Where am I?... This is most assuredly
The cave of death! For a most noble combat,
In truth, oh Garcia, thou preparest thyself.

Oh heaven ! what am I doing ? 'Innocence,
 Thou which wert heretofore my only boast,
 Thou art no longer mine : the impious blow
 I've pledged myself to strike . . . and shall I strike
 it ? . . .

In every corner of this gloomy cave
 I hear a sound of death : and on myself
 Alone I cannot now that death inflict . . .
 Oh cruel destiny ! . . . Night's thickest shades
 Already cover all things ; and 'tis come,
 Nay, 'tis exceeded, the tremendous hour !—
 Assuredly Piero did dispatch
 The messenger of death : why should I doubt ?
 Did Piero e'er delay to do a thing
 That might endanger others ? The embassy,
 Too certainly was sent ! . . . Unhappy friend !
 Thou with security awaitest me,
 In the impious cave, destined to be thy tomb . . .
 Thy tomb ? . . . Shall I destroy thee ? Never, never.
 Why do I grasp thee, hated sword of Cosmo ?
 Far from me, cursed instrument ! . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Eleonora, Garcia.

Ele. Oh son ! . . .

Gar. Mother, whence comest thou ? To rescue
 me

From this commanded crime ?

Ele. Oh heaven ! To thee

Thy cruel father sends me.

Gar. What wills he ?

Ele. That I should come, alas ! to ascertain

With these my eyes, if thou prepare thyself
 To obey him. This abominable task
 Belong'd to Piero; but he found him not;
 Hence he chose me . . . Alas! and I to him
 Am instantly commanded to return.
 What shall I say to him?

Gar. That hitherto

My hands are pure: ah, that my lips were so!
 But, if I promised it, I now refuse
 That promise to fulfil. Go, tell him this . . .

Ele. Oh heaven! Dost thou not know, if I should
 dare

To repeat this to him, I should expose thee
 To dreadful danger? He is blind with rage . . .

Gar. Let him be so; and let him murder me;
 This I expect.

Ele. And Julia?

Gar. Oh that name! . . .

Ele. Take pity on her, if thou do refuse it
 Both to thy wretched mother and thyself.

Gar. Go then, and say to him, . . . that I obey:
 Meanwhile without delay my Julia rescue . . .

Ele. Rescue! Does Cosmo trust to simple words?
 He, with his own eyes, here will see the victim.
 Ah son! it tortures me to goad thee thus
 To an unworthy deed; . . . but yet, . . . reflect . . .

Gar. Is it impossible that Julia then . . .

Ele. I dare not tell thee all; . . . yet, if I'm silent . . .

Gar. Speak, mother, speak at once. 'Thou mak'st
 me tremble.

Ele. While I confer with thee, . . . Cosmo himself . . .
 Holds o'er the bosom of the trembling maid
 An unsheathed dagger . . .

Gar. Oh atrocious sight !
 Stop, father, stop thy arm ; I will destroy him ; ..
 I return quickly ; ... stop ; ... thou shalt behold me
 Swimming in blood ... Where is my sword, my
 sword ? ...
 'Tis here ; I fly ... Oh father ... stop ... I fly.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Piero.

Pi. Oh thou disciple of romantic virtue,
 Dost thou too tread expediency's broad path ?
 It were indeed a miracle, hadst thou
 Belied the character of all our race !—
 Now go, and plunge thou in a guiltless breast
 Thy reeking dagger.—What will thence ensue ?
 I do not know ; but be it what it may,
 The inextricable knot, which chance and art
 Have emulously twined, the sword alone
 Can disentangle.—Let us hear ... But what ?
 Do I hear Garcia return already ?
 He returns quickly. Should he have repented ?
 It is not, is not so ; for I behold him
 Come like a man whom conscious guilt pursues.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Garcia, Piero.

Gar. Who art thou ? ... Who ... presents himself
 to me ...
 Upon the thresholds of mortality ?
Pi. Thy brother, Piero ...
Gar. The son of Cosmo ?

Pi. And thou, art thou not so?

Gar. I ^{am} so, . . . yes . . .

Now that I am a traitor.

Pi. Hast thou slain him?

Gar. Dost thou not see it, by my steps, . . . my
gestures, . . .

My faulting voice, . . . the unaccustomed fear . . .
Which smites my heart?

Pi. I pitied thee before,

And now much more.—But thou hast saved thy Julia.

Gar. Oh heaven! who knows if yet my father . . .

Pi. Hence

I fly to him. Soon as I bring to him
Proof that by thy hand Salvati fell,
Julia will be in safety.

Gar. Proof? Behold

My sword; it trickles yet with smoking blood.
Go, take it to him . . . but if it should meet
His daughter's eyes, . . . oh heaven! . . .

Pi. But art thou sure

Thou tookest aim effectively? Fell he
At the first blow? And spake he not?

Gar. Fear'st thou

That yet he is alive? Or doth it please thee
To hear from me the atrocious narrative,
To fill thy bosom with malignant joy?
Thou shalt be satisfied: and tell it thou
To my unnatural father.—

Soon as I enter'd in the cave I heard,
And seem'd to see, my victim groping there,
Who had preceded me. I quickly raised
My arm to smite him, but my arm dropped down . . .
Already I retreated; when, methought,

A shriek from Julia, like a shriek of death,
 'I heard, and spite of me it drew me back.
 Hearing a foot-fall, Salvati rush'd
 Meanwhile towards the entrance, and approach'd
 me.

At once I planted, even to the hilt,
 The execrable dagger in his heart . . .
 One sigh alone, one bursting sigh of death,
 Falling, he breathed . . . Oh horrible to tell! . . .
 I felt myself aspersed with spouting blood:
 A death-like chillness crept through all my veins; . .
 And scarcely I restrain'd myself from falling
 Upon the bleeding corse . . . Wretch that I am! . . .
 Groping with trembling hands, I scarcely gain'd
 The mouth of that abominable tomb . . .
 Hast heard enough?—Dost thou exult in hearing?

Pi. Why shouldst thou wrong me thus?—Fortune
 at least,

In one respect, has been to thee propitious,
 That I alone beheld thee quit this cave.—
 My father will hereafter well know how
 To give what colour serves his purpose best
 To this calamity. Time cancels all things;
 Even affliction yields at length to time.
 If thus my father will'd, the guilt is his:
 Thanks, not dishonour, thou should'st reap from it.
 Besides, that he especially will wish
 For ever to conceal it.—Calm thyself:
 Light is a crime that ne'er will be divulged.

Gar. Rewards to me!—death now is my desert.
 Where shall I hide myself? This guiltless blood,
 With which I am polluted and besmear'd,
 What could e'er cleanse it? Not my useless tears,

Nor the last drop of all my blood could do it.—
 Go thou to Cosmo; yield him back his sword;
 Do thou receive his recompenses. Thou
 The cruel messenger of death didst send:
 Thou didst exult, perfidious brother! thou,
 That I became, as thou thyself art, base
 And infamous.—Thou art the real son
 Of Cosmo.—Go; this instant leave me.—Where,
 Where can I ever from myself escape? . . .
 Where shall I hide myself? . . . Ah! how shall I
 Sustain the glances of Diego now,
 Now that he's justified in calling me
 A traitor?—of Diego, who, though dear
 To you, had never been himself a traitor? . . .
 Oh rage! . . . Oh irrecoverable shame! . . .

Pi. Thou canst not instantaneously resume
 Collected thoughts . . . Appease thy just regrets:
 Meanwhile I will precede thee to thy father.
 I hope thy crime will always be unknown
 Both to Diego and to all mankind.

Gar. All men shall know it: such a punishment
 I have already to myself prescribed,
 That false suspicion may not fall on others.
 Obtain alone that I, on my arrival,
 Find that unhappy Julia restored
 To liberty . . . It afterwards depends
 On me to inflict just vengeance on my crime.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cosmo, García.

Cos. Advance, nearer advance. By how! thou tremblest!

Dost thou deserve reward or punishment?

What hast thou done? This instant tell me all.

Gar. Before to-day didst thou e'er see me tremble?

Thou oughtest to be well aware how fear

Ever accompanies a guilty conscience.

My brief address, oh Còsmo, hear. At length

I have, thou knowest, with my dastard hand

Accomplish'd thy magnanimous revenge,

And I was taught to expect that Julia's safety

Would recompense the murderer of her father.

For thou erewhile didst generously promise

That I should purchase by the blood of one

The freedom of another innocent.

Ah! tell me, hast thou then at last released

Julia from chains? Shall that most wretched maid

Life and security at least retain?

Cos. Not only I release her, but with thee
Will join her, if thou hast perform'd the deed.

Gar. Join her with me! oh crime And thinkest
thou

That I am so consummately thy son

I am thy son indeed, but not so much.

If I have been a traitor, heaven know wherefore . .

Cos. Thou better know'st thyself. But whence are
 now
 Thy mad audacity, thy pride, thy threats,
 In thee redoubled?

Gar. Whence! Defiled with blood,
 I am the instrument of thy commands,
 And should I not be sworn with haughty thoughts?
 Since I am the most guilty, am I not
 Now the most dear to thee of all thy sons?

Cos. Mercant! ere long and thou indeed wilt
 tremble...

Gar. I trembled while I yet was innocent:
 Now am I reckless from despairing guilt.
 I only ask of thee that thou would'st now
 Fulfil thy promise. My own destiny
 I have ere now fix'd, and for ever fix'd.

Cos. More fix'd perchance my will. She ne'er
 shall be
 Released, if she is not thy consort first:
 Or thine or in eternal chains. Shall I
 Suffer her ancient rancour, her new wish
 To avenge her father's murder, to be brought
 A wedding dowry to another spouse?
 Her's thou alone...

Gar. Ah me! what have I done? ...
 Oh what art thou? ... No ... never ...

Cos. Cease; this ought
 Not to afflict thee now: thou'rt call'd upon
 First to convince me that with thy own hand
 Thou hast slain Salviati.—Know'st thou this?
 What proofs of it canst thou adduce to me?

Gar. What proofs! Oh guilty grief! doth it not
 then

Suffice to be a miscreant? 'Is there need
 Also to triumph in committed crimes?
 Ah, see my guilt upon my face engraved,
 See it exultingly. My desperate deeds,
 My eyes, my gestures, and the tones of death
 Most audible in every word I utter,
 Do not they all express it? And the blood
 With which I am defiled from head to foot,
 Yet crimson, smoking yet?

Cos. I see that blood:

But whose it is I have not yet discover'd.
 I only have obtain'd entire conviction
 That it is not the blood that I demanded.

Gar. Oh rage! and doubt?... Then thither go
 thyself:

Plant thou thy feet within the horrible cave;
 That wretched victim in a lake of blood
 There wilt thou see extended. Go, and feed
 On the dire spectacle; go satisfy
 Not thy sight only, but thy other senses:
 Touch with thy hand the gaping wound of death;
 Feed on his quivering heart; and, tyger, drink
 In copious draughts its blood; thy regal rage
 Pour out on that exanimated breast.
 Once, twice, and four times, nay, a thousand times,
 Plunge in that form that can contend no more
 Thy valorous dagger: there make noble proof
 Of all thy prowess,—sceptred hero—there;
 Thou hast no other place.—Unheard-of death!
 Unheard-of pangs! I am a parricide,
 The son of Cosmo, I; and innocent
 That Cosmo would account me!...

Cos. Who denies

That thou'rt a miscreant, who? Thou hast, I think,
 inflicted death; but not on him whose death,
 from the complexion of these perilous times,
 is no less indispensable than just.
 Thou art, but not of any foe of mine,
 A murderer: more I know not; but ere long
 I shall know all; quickly I shall behold
 With my own eyes . . .

Gar. Hast thou not seen Piero?
 And said he not to thee that Salviati,
 By his contrivance, enter'd first the cave? . . .

Cos. Yes, yes, Piero came, and said to me
 That Salviati in that cave this night
 hath never enter'd, nor e'en thought to do it.
 Thither I now repair, where thou hast stain'd
 The soil with blood. If he has not fall'n there,
 Frail be thyself. My tury, destined all
 To wreak itself on that devoted head,
 Who knows, perchance . . . to-day . . . may elsewhere
 . . . fall . . .

SCENE THE SECOND.

Garcia.

Gar. What do I hear? Oh heaven! that in that
 cave
 The feet of Salviati have not enter'd!
 Piero says so! and to Cosmo says it!
 Oh horrible and fatal mystery!
 Whose is that blood then that I thus have shed?
 Oh how I shudder with affright! . . . But yet,
 What other murder were a crime like this?
 Ah! were it true that this my impious hand

Had slain all others rather than himself! . . .
 Whom hast thou then destroy'd? . . I well remember,
 That when I issued breathless from the cave
 Piero stood before me suddenly,
 With hesitating looks . . . What did he say?
 Oh, well I recollect; . . . he was disturb'd,
 And manifested great anxiety
 To hear my narrative: for me he waited:
 His words were broken, doubtful, apprehensive . . .
 Nor Salviati's danger, nor my own,
 Could ever wake in him such agony . . .
 « Perhaps he himself within that grot had laid
 Some snare for my destruction! . . . Yet the man
 Whom I transfix'd appear'd to me unarm'd.
 I was the first to assault him: he spake not . . .
 What boots it? . . . More obscure than threefold
 night,
 Who, except Cosmo or Piero, can
 Unravel thee, thou horrid mystery?
 But more and more I feel myself o'erwhelm'd
 With unaccustom'd fear: within my heart
 An unknown terror rises.—Oh suspense,
 Oh thou the chief and worst of ills, no more,
 No more thy torments will I thus embosom!
 Thither I go; thither I go myself,
 To see what death . . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Eleonora, Garcia.

Ele. Oh son! what hast thou done?
 Fly hence . . . ah fly! . . .

Gar. Fly! . . . I! . . . and wherefore? whither?

Ele. Fly, fly, old son! . . .

Gar. Al! no! I will not fly.

My father, on my ruin bent, contrived
The crime, whate'er it be. I fly not, no.

Ele. Ah! if thou carest for thyself, for us,
For me, withdraw thyself without delay
From the first violence of thy father's fury.

Gar. Fury! what have I done? and what can add
Force to his natural ferocity?

Ele. Hear'st thou?—On every side with piercing
cries
The palace echoes.—What canst thou have done?
Preceded by a hundred torches, Cosmo
Enraged within the grotto ran; in arms
Others pursued him: all at once cried out
The name of Garcia. What canst thou have done?
Thou know'st him well; ah fly!—Oh heaven! he
comes!

What stunning clamour! Didst thou hear the cry?
"Treason! and to the traitor!" . . . Oh my son!

Gar. The treason is from Cosmo; Cosmo is
The traitor; but I'm doom'd to be the victim;
I have deserved it. Let him come; I fear not.

Ele. Ah wretched me! with sword unsheath'd . . .
At least
Shelter in these my arms . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

*Eleonora, Garcia, Cosmo, with naked Sword, Guards
with Torches and Arms.*

Cos. On every side . . .

Close up the avenues.—Where is the traitor?
Slunk to his mother's arms. In vain . . .

Gar. From thence
I've freed myself. What wouldest thou with me?
What have I done?

Ele. Pity! thou art a father . . .

Cos. I was so once.

Ele. Oh heavens! . . .

Gar. What have I done?

Cos. Askest thou that, when thou hast slain Diego?

Ele. My son! . . .

Gar. My brother! . . .

Cos. Lady, get thee hence . . .

Ele. Yet he's thy son . . .

Gar. Behold my breast . . .

Ele. Ah! pause . . .

Cos. Die! die!

Ele. Thy son! . . . Oh blow! . . .

Cos. Impious! is he

To thee a son, he who hath slain a son?

Gar. We all . . . are impious . . . Never did the day
Visit a more flagitious race than ours.—

Father . . . I swear to thee . . . I knew it not . . .

If . . . by this hand of mine . . . Diego fell,

Piero . . . plann'd . . . the execrable scheme.

Father . . . I . . . die . . . and dying . . . I invoke . . .

The heavens . . . to witness . . . that . . . I speak the
truth.

Cos. Beloved Diego! I lose thee! . . . Oh heavens! . . .

* She falls in a swoon.

ACT THE FIFTH.

And in the life-blood of another son
I've bathed this dagger ! In the arms of death
My consort lies : . . . on my remaining son
Frightful suspicions fall . . . Oh state ! . . . To whom
Can I now turn ? . . . Alas ! . . . In whom confide ?

S A U L.
A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAUL.	AHIMELICH.
JONATHAN.	MICHAEL.
DAVID.	<i>Soldiers of the Israelites</i>
ABNER.	<i>Soldiers of the Philistines.</i>

SCENE,—The Camp of the Israelites in Gilboa.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

David.

Da. Here, God omnipotent, wilt thou that I
Restrain that ~~course~~ to which thou hast impell'd me :
Here will I stand ?—These are Gilboa's mountains,
Now forming Israel's camp, exposed in front
To the impious Philistine. Ah, that I
Might fall to-day beneath the enemy's sword !
But death awaits me from the hand of Saul.
Ah cruel and infatuated Saul,
Who, without giving him a moment's respite,
Through caverns, and o'er cliffs, dost chase thy
champion.

And, notwithstanding David formerly
Was thy defender : all thy confidence

In me hadst thou reposed ; me didst thou raise
 To honour's pinnacle ; and as a spouse
 I was by thee selected for thy daughter . . .
 But, as an inauspicious dowry, thou
 Didst ask of me, dissevered from thy foes,
 A hundred heads : and I have brought of them
 To thee, faithfully brought, a double harvest . . .
 But Saul, I clearly see, in thought is stricken ;
 Long hath he been so ; to an evil spirit
 His God abandons his perverted mind :
 Oh Heaven ! Distracted mortals, what are we
 If God forsake us ?—Night, do thou soon yield
 Thy shades to the glad sun ; for he to-day
 The witness of a generous enterprise
 Is destined to shine forth. Gilboa, thou
 Shalt, to the latest ages, be renown'd ;
 They shall record of thee, that David here
 Himself surrendered to ferocious Saul.—
 March forth, oh Israel, from thy peaceful tents ;
 March forth from them, oh King : I challenge you
 To-day to witness, if I yet am versed
 In military arts. And march thou forth,
 Impious Philistine ; march thou forth, and see
 Whether my sword have yet the power to smite.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Jonathan, David.

Jon. What voice hath caught my ears ? I hear a
 voice
 Skillful to penetrate my heart.
Da. Who comes ? . . .
 Oh that the dawn would rise ! Fain would not I

Like a base fugitive present my elf . . .

Jon. What! ho! Who art thou? Near the royal
tent,

What is thy business? Speak.

Da. 'Tis Jonathan.

Courage.—A son of war, and Israel's stay,
Am I. Philistia trembles at my name.

Jon. What do I hear? Ah! David could alone
Thus answer.

Da. Jonathan . . .

Jon. My brother . . . David!

Da. Oh joy! . . . To thee . . .

Jon. And can it then be true?

Thou in Gilboa? Fear'st thou not my father?
I tremble for thee! . . .

Da. Wherefore speak'st thou thus?

Death present, in the fight, a thousand times
Have I beheld and braved: for a long time
I have since fled thy father's unjust rage;
But to the valiant fear alone is death.
No longer now I fear: with mighty danger
The monarch, and his people, are encompass'd.
Shall David be the recreant meanwhile
To skulk securely in untrodden forests?
While imminent o'er you the weapons hang
Of the unfaithful, shall I take a thought
Of my own safety? I come here to die;
But, like a hero, in my country's cause,
Amid the clash of arms, and in the camp,
And for that very ill-requiting Saul
Who now pursues me with the cry of death.

Jon. Oh virtue, worthy David! God's elect
Thou art assuredly. That God hath sent

His angel as his minister to guard thee,
 Who with such superhuman thoughts inspires
 Thy lofty heart.—Yet to the monarch's presence
 How shall I bring thee? He believes, or feigns,
 That thou art enroll'd among his enemies;
 And taxes thee with treachery and rebellion.

Da. Alas! too forcibly he tempted me
 To seek a refuge 'mid the foes of Israel.
 But if those foes impugn him with their arms,
 I war with them, for him, till they're subdued.
 Then let him afterwards repeat to me
 My ancient recompense,—his hate and death.

Jon. Unhappy father! There are who deceive
 him.

Perfidious Abner, a dissembling friend,
 Is ever at his side. The ghastly demon,
 That hath possess'd, and subjugates his heart,
 At least bestows on him a transient respite;
 But Abner's unrelenting artifice
 Never forsakes him. He alone is heard,
 He only; he alone is loved. To Saul,
 Like a malignant parasite, he paints
 All that surpasses his frail excellence,
 As dangerous and uncertain. With thy father,
 In vain thy wife and I...

Da. My wife! Loved name?
 Where is my faithful Michal, where? Does she,
 Spite of her cruel father, love me yet?

Jon. Love thee, say'st thou? ... She, too, is in
 the camp...

Da. Oh Heaven! Shall I behold her then? Oh
 joy!
 How came she in the camp? ...

Jon. Her father felt
Pity for her ; alone he would not leave her,
A victim to her sorrow, in the palace ;
And even she, though always sad, affords
To him some comfort. Ah ! since thy departure,
Our house, indeed, has been the house of tears.

Da. Beloved spouse ! Thy renovating look
Will banish every thought of past distress ;
Banish all thoughts of suffering to come.

Jon. Ah, hadst thou seen her ! . . . Scarcely had
she lost thee,
When every ornament her grief disdain'd ;
With loathsome ashes her dishevell'd hair ;
With desolation, pallidness, and tears,
And leanness, was her countenance disfigured ;
Profound mute grief sat on her trembling heart.
A thousand times each day she prostrate fell
Before her father ; and with sobs exclaim'd,
“ Restore my David, thou who gav'st him to me.”
Her garments thence she rent ; and, weeping, bathed
Her father's hand, that even he shed tears.
Who could refrain ?—Abner alone ; and he
Insisted that, half dead e'en as she was,
She should be sever'd from her father's feet.

Da. Oh sight ! Oh what dost thou recount to me ?

Jon. Would it were not the truth ! . . . At thy departure

Peace, glory, enterprise in arms, departed.
The hearts of Israel are benumb'd with dread ;
Philistia's sons, who heretofore appear'd
Mere striplings when we fought beneath thy banners,
Now, since no more we have thee for our leader,
With port colossal stalk before our eyes :

Pent in this valley, mindless of ourselves,
 Threats, insults, and derision, we endure.
 Why should we wonder? Israel bath at once
 In David lost her judgment and her sword.
 I, who, pursuing thy heroic steps,
 Elate with conscious glory trod the camp,
 Now feel my right-hand impotent to smite.
 Now that so often I behold thee, David,
 Exposed to hardships, sever'd from my side,
 Pursued by danger, now no more I seem
 To combat for my monarch, and my father,
 My wife, my children; far more dear to me
 Art thou than country, father, wife, and sons . . .

Da. Thou lovest me, and more than I deserve
 May God reward thy love . . .

Jon. The God of justice,
 The swift rewarder of true excellence,
 He is with thee. By dying Samuel wert thou
 In Ramia recognized: the sacred lips
 Of the anointed prophet, by whose means
 My sire was crown'd, great marvels prophesied
 Of thee in after times: hence, in my sight
 Thy life is no less sacred than beloved.
 Th' insidious perils of the court alone
 For thee alarm me; not those of the camp.
 But death, and treachery, death's harbinger,
 Round these pavilions hover evermore:
 Death, Abner gives it; often Saul commands it
 Ah, David! hide thyself; until, at least,
 The mountain echo with the warlike trumpet.
 To-day I deem that we shall be compell'd
 To meet our foes.

Da. And shall a valorous deed

Be like a scheme of guilt by stealth transacted?
 Saul shall behold me ere I meet my foes.
 I bring with me what must confound; what must
 Reform the hardest of all harden'd hearts,
 I bring; and first the fury of the king,
 Then that of hostile swords, I will confront.—
 What canst thou say, oh king, if I to thee
 Bend, as thy servant, my submissive brows?
 I who, the husband of thy daughter, ask
 Pardon of thee for ne'er committed faults:
 Thy ancient champion I; who in the jaws
 Of mortal danger, as thy comrade, shield,
 Or victim, offer now myself to thee.—
 The sacred old man dying greeted me
 In Rama, and address'd me like a father;
 And in my arms expired. As his own son
 He formerly loved Saul; but what reward
 Had he for this? The holy, dying man,
 Enjoin'd my love and fealty to the king,
 Not less than blind obedience to my God.
 His latest words shall be, e'en till I die,
 Indelibly engraven on my heart:
 "Ah, wretched Saul! if thou art not more wise,
 "The wrath of the Most High will fall upon thee."
 This Samuel said to me.—My Jonathan,
 Fain would I see thee from the just revenge
 Of Heaven exempt: and thou, I trust, shall be:
 And so we all shall be; and Saul, who yet
 May pardon seek, and reconciliation gain.
 Ah woe, if th' everlasting send his bolt
 Of vengeance from the gaping firmament!
 Thou know'st, that often in the fierce career
 Of his retributory punishments,

He hath involved the guiltless, with the guilty.
 His irresistible, impetuous flash
 On earth rebounds, extirpates, and dissolves,
 With the infected reprobated plant,
 The flowers, the fruits, the foliage of the rest.

Jon. David can, with his God, do much for Saul.
 Oft in the visions of the night I've seen thee,
 And so sublime in look, that at thy feet
 Prostrate I've fallen.—More I shall not say;
 Nor more should'st thou to me. Long as I live,
 I swear, that sword of Saul shall ne'er descend
 To injure thee, no never. But, oh Heaven!
 How can I screen thee from vile stratagems? . . .
 Here, 'mid the pleasures of the costly banquet,
 Here, 'mid th' accordance of bewitching sounds,
 Is poison oft imbibed in faithless gold.
 Ah! who from this can guard thee?

Da. Israel's God,
 If I deserve deliverance; not a host,
 If I deserve destruction.—But inform me,
 Can I now see my wife before my father?
 Till the dawn breaks I would not enter there . . .

Jon. On downy plumes doth she await the day?
 Before the dawn she duly comes to me
 To weep thy absence; and together here
 We put up prayers to God for our sick father . . .
 Behold! a form in white not far from us
 Gleams indistinctly: perhaps it is she:
 A little step aside, and listen to her:
 But if it be another, do not now,
 I pray thee, shew thyself. . .

Da. I will obey thee.

SCENE THE THIRTIETH

Michal, Jonathan.

Mi. Long hated night, wilt thou ne'er disappear? . . .

But doth the sun, indeed, for me arise
The harbinger of joy? Ah wretched me!
For I in everlasting darkness pine!—
Hast thou, my brother, left thy bed the earliest?
Yet, certainly, my frame, that never rests,
Was most exhausted. But how can I rest
On easy pillows, while on the hard earth,
Banish'd, a fugitive, within the dens
Of cruel beasts, and watch'd by ambush'd foes,
My David lies? Ah, father, fiercer far
Than ravening monsters of the wilderness!
Hard-hearted Saul! Thou takest from thy child
Her husband, and thou takest not her life?—
Hear me, my brother, here no more I tarry:
'Twill be a noble deed if thou go with me:
But if thou go not, I alone will venture
His footsteps to retrace. I am resolved
To find my husband, or to suffer death.

Jon. Delay a little while; and dry thy tears.
Perhaps our David will come to Gilboa . . .

Mi. What say'st thou? Can he e'er approach
the place
Which Saul inhabits? . . .

Jon. David will be drawn,
Drawn irresistibly by his fond heart,
And his unswerving constancy, t' approach
The place where Jonathan and Michal dwell.

Dost thou not think that his prevailing love
Can bid defiance to the power of fear?
And would'st thou wonder if he dared come hither?
Mi. Oh, I should tremble for his life . . . But yet
The seeing him would make me . . .

Jon. And if he
I can'd nothing? . . . and should he with arguments
Defend his vent'rous enterprise?—The king,
Less terrible in his adversity
Than in prosperity, bewilder'd stands,
His powers mistrusting; this thou know'st full well.
Since the invincible right-hand of David
For him disperses not yon hostile ranks,
Saul fears; but, arrogant, he speaks it not.
Each of us in his face can well discern
That hopes of victory are not in his heart.
Perhaps this moment he would see thy spouse.

Mi. Yes, it is true perhaps; but he is far; . . .
Ah! where? . . . and in what state? . . .

Jon. More than thou thinkest
He is near to thee.

Mi. Heavens! . . . why mock me thus? . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

David, Michal, Jonathan.

Da. Thy spouse is at thy side.

Mi. Oh voice! . . . oh sight! . . .
I cannot speak for joy!—Supreme amazement! . . .
And is it true that I at last embrace thee? . . .

Da. Beloved wife! . . . Hard has my absence
been! . . .

Death, if I'm doom'd to meet with thee to-day,

But only for an instant: after that,
 Never, no never, will I leave thee more.
 Yet first would I see thee conceal'd in safety.
 Behold! dost thou not see a spacious grove
 In the recesses of that gloomy wood?
 There oft have I invoked thee, from the world
 Retired, and sigh'd for thee, and thought on thee;
 There with my bitter tears have I bedew'd
 The rugged stones: in this conceal thyself,
 Till the fit time come for discovering thee.

Da. In all things, Michal, I would yield to thee.
 Go in implicit trust: I am impell'd
 By a sure instinct, and at random act not;
 I love you both; for your sakes do I live;
 And in Jehovah only I confide.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Saul, Abner.

Sa. This dawn how splendid! Th' universal sun
 Arises not wrapt in a bloody shroud;
 He seems to promise a propitious day.—
 Oh, my past years! where now are ye all fled?
 Saul never from his martial bed, till now,
 Rose in the camp, without the certain trust
 That, ere at eve his pillow he resumed,
 He should be victor.

Ab. Wherefore now, oh king,
 Dost thou despair? Hast thou not heretofore
 Routed the squadrons of Philistia's host?
 Abner assures thee, that, as to this fight,

Thou com'st more tardily, thence shalt thou reap
From its result unprecedented fame.

Sa. Oh, Abner, with what different eyes do youth
And hoary age contemplate the events
Of human life. When with a well-knit arm
I grasp'd this ponderous and gnarled spear,
Which now I scarcely sway, I ill conceived
The possibility of self-mistrust . . .
But I have now not only lost my youth . . .
Ah! were th' invincible right-hand of God
E'en yet with me! . . . or were with me at least
David, my champion! . . .

Ab. What then are we?
Perhaps without him we no longer conquer?
If I thought that, I never would unsheathe
My sword again, except to pierce my heart.
David, who is the first and only cause
Of all thy misadventures . . .

Sa. Thou'rt deceived.—
All my calamities may be referr'd
To a more terrible cause . . . And what? Would'st
thou

Conceal from me the horror of my state?
Ah! were I not a father, as I am,
Alas! too certainly, of much-loved children, . . .
Would I have now life, victory, or the throne? . . .
I should already, and a long time since,
Headlong have cast myself mid hostile swords;
I should already, thus at least, at once
Have closed the horrible life that I drag on.
How many years have now past, since a smile
Was seen to play upon my lips? My children,

Whom still I love so much, if they care^s me,
 For the most part inflame my heart to rage . . .
 Impatient, fierce, incensed, and turbulent,
 I am a burthen to myself and others ;
 In peace I wish for war, in war for peace :
 Poison conceal'd I drink in every cup,
 In every friend I see an enemy ;
 The softest carpets of Assyria seem
 Planted with thorns to my unsolaced limbs ;
 My transient sleep is agonized with fear ;
 Each dream with imaged terrors that distract me.
 Why should I add to this dark catalogue ?
 Who would believe it ? The sonorous trumpet
 Speaks to my ears in an appalling voice ;
 And fills the heart of Saul with deep dismay.
 Thou seest clearly that Saul's tottering house
 Is desolate, bereft of all its splendour ;
 Thou seest that God hath cast me off for ever.
 And thou thyself (too well thou know'st the truth)
 Dost sometimes, as thou art, appear to me
 My kinsman, champion, and my real friend,
 'The leader of my armies, the support
 Of my renown ; and sometimes dost appear
 The interested minion of a court,
 Hostile, invidious, crafty, and a traitor.

Ab. Now, Saul, that thou hast thus regain'd thy
 reason,

Do thou, I pray thee, to thy mind recall
 Each past transaction ! Art thou not aware
 That all the wounds of thy afflicted heart
 From Rama spring ; yea, from the dwelling spring
 Of Rama's many prophets. Who to thee
 First dared to say, that God had cast thee off ?

Th' audacious, turbulent, and crafty seer,
 Th' ambitious, doting priest, whose palsyng words
 His scycophantic worshippers repeat.
 The royal wreath, which he thought his, he saw
 With jealous eyes glittering upon thy brows.
 Already he accounted it entwined
 Around his hoary locks; when lo! the voice,
 Th' unanimous, acclamatory voice,
 Of Israel's people, to the wind dispersed
 His wishes, and a warrior king preferred.
 This is thy crime, this only. Hence, when thou
 Ceasedst to be subordinate to him,
 He ceased to call thee the elect of God.
 This, this alone at first disturb'd thy reason;
 And David's hierophantic eloquence
 The injury completed. He in arms
 Was valiant, I deny it not; but still
 He was implicitly the tool of Samuel,
 And fitter for the altar than the camp:
 In arm a warrior, but in heart a priest.
 Of every adventitious ornament
 Be truth divested; thou dost know the truth.
 I from thy blood am sprung; what constitutes
 Thy glory, constitutes my glory too:
 But David, no, can never raise himself,
 If first he tread not Saul beneath his feet.

Sa. David? . . . I hate him . . . But yet I to him
 Have yielded as a consort my own daughter . . .
 Ah! thou canst never know.—That self-same voice
 Imperative and visionary voice,
 Which as a youth my nightly slumbers broke,
 When I in privacy obscurely lived
 Far from the throne, and all aspiring thoughts,

For sundry nights hath that same voice been heard
 In menacing, denunciatory tones ;
 Like the deep murmur of the stormy waves,
 Thundering repulsively, to me it cried,—
 “ Depart, depart, oh Saul.” . . . The sacred aspect,
 The venerable aspect of the prophet,
 Which I had seen in dreams before he had
 Made manifest that God had chosen me
 For Israel’s king, that Samuel, in a dream,
 Now with far different aspect I behold.
 I, from a hollow, deep, and horrible vale,
 Behold him sitting on a radiant mount :
 David is humbly prostrate at his feet :
 The holy prophet on his forehead pours
 The consecrated oil : with th’ other hand
 Stretch’d to my head, a hundred cubits length,
 He snatches from my brow the royal crown,
 And would replace it on the brow of David :
 But, would’st thou think it ? David prostrate falls,
 With piteous gesture, at the prophet’s feet,
 Refusing to receive it : and he weeps,
 And cries, and intercedes so fervently,
 That he refits it on my head at last . . .
 —Oh spectacle !—Oh David, generous David !
 Then thou art yet obedient to thy king ?
 My son ? my faithful subject ? and my friend ? . . .
 Distraction ! . . . Would’st thou take from me my
 crown ?
 Thou, who dared’st do it, insolent old man,
 Tremble . . . Who art thou ? . . . Let him die at once
 Who e’en conceived the thought.—Alas, alas !
 I rave like one distracted ! . . .
 Ab. Let him die ;

Let David die alone: and with him vanish
Dreams, terrors, omens, and distresses.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Jonathan, Michal, Saul, Abner.

Jon. Peace
Be with my king.

Mi. And God be with my father.

Sa. Grief always is with me.—I rose to-day
Before my custom'd hour, in joyful hope . . .
But, like a vapour of the desert, hope
Hath disappear'd already.—Oh my son,
What boots it now the battle to defer?
To dread defeat is worse than to endure it.
And let us once endure it:—Let us fight
To-day; I will it.

Jon. We to-day shall conquer.
Father, resume thy hopes: hope never shone
With more authentic brightness on thy prospects.
Ah, recompose thy looks! my heart is big
With presages of victory. All this plain
Shall with the bodies of our foes be cover'd;
And to the ravenous vultures will we leave
A horrid banquet . . .

Mi. To a calmer spot
Within thy palace we will soon repair,
Oh father. There, amid thy palms enthroned,
Joyful thyself, thou, by restoring to her
Her much-loved husband, wilt restore to life
Thy desolate daughter . . .

Sa. . . . Evermore in tears? . . .
Are these, indeed, the pleasing objects doom'd

To renovate Saul's languid, wither'd mind?
 Art thou a solace thus to my just grief?
 Daughter of tears, depart; go; leave me; vanish.

Mi. Alas! . . . Thou would'st not, father, that I
 wept? . . .

Father, and who in everlasting tears
 Now keeps me, if not thou? ~

Jon. Refrain; would'st thou
 Be irksome to thy father?—Saul, take comfort:
 A minister of war and victory
 Stands in the camp: a spirit of salvation,
 With dawning light descended from the skies,
 Which o'er all Israel's host will spread to-day
 His brooding wings. A certainty of conquest,
 E'en to thy heart, will quickly circulate.

Sa. Now, perhaps, thou would'st that I should
 take a part

In thy weak transports? I?—What victory?
 What spirit comes? . . . Let us all weep. To-day
 That venerable oak, torn up, will shew
 Its squalid roots, where heretofore it spread
 Its stately branches to the gales of Heaven.
 All, all is weeping, tempest, blood, and death.
 Rend, rend your garments; scatter on your hair
 Polluting dust. Yes, this day is the last;
 To us the final day.

Ab. Oft have I said it:
 Your importuning presence evermore
 Redoubles his fierce pangs.

Mi. And what? Must we
 Leave our beloved father?

Jon. At his side
 Presumest thou alone to stand? Dost thou

Presume thou in thy hands? . . .

Sa. What, what is this?

Rage sits upon the faces of my sons.

Who, who has wrong'd them? Abner, thou perchance?

These are my blood; dost not know that? . . . Remember . . .

Jon. Ah yes! we are thy blood; and for thy sake Hold ourselves ready all our blood to shed . . .

Mi. When at thy hands my consort I require,

Am I by selfish love alone impell'd?

I ask of thee the champion of thy people,

The terror of Philistia, thy defender.

In thy disconsolate fantastic hours,

And in thy fatal presages of death,

Ah! did not David sometimes solace thee

With his celestial music? Was not he

A beam of joy to thy benighted soul?

Jon. And I, thou knowest if I wear a sword.

But what boots that, if the resounding steps

Of Israel's warrior to my steps give not

The law supreme? Should we of fighting *speak*

Were David here? We had already conquer'd.

Sa. Oh times long past! . . . Oh my illustrious days

Of joyful victory! . . . Lo! they throng before me—

Triumphant images of past success.

I from the camp return, with bloody sweat

All cover'd, and with honourable dust.

And praises to the Lord . . . I praise the Lord!

The ears of God are deafen'd to my voice; 43*

Mute is my lip . . . Where is my glory, where?

Where is the blood of my slain enemies?

Jon. Thou wouldest have all in David . . .

Mi. But with thee
David is not, oh no - to banishment
Thou drov'st him from thy presence, sought'st his
death . . .

David, thy son, thy noblest ornament,
Modest and docile; more than lightning swift
To obey thee; and in loving thee more warm
Than thy own children. Father, ah! desist . . .

Sa. Tears from my eyes are gushing! Who hath
thus

Forced me to unaccustom'd tenderness? . . .
Compel me not to weep.

Ab. I counsel thee,
Oh king, withdraw from hence to thy pavilion.
Thy marshall'd forces, ready for the combat,
Ere long I will display to thee.—Now come;
And be convinced that nothing is in David . . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

David, Saul, Abner, Jonathan, Michal.

Da. . . . Except his innocence.

Sa. What do I see?

Mi. Oh heaven!

Jon. What hast thou done?

Ab. Audacious . . .

Jon. Father . . .

Mi. Father, he is my spouse; to me thou gav'st
him.

Sa. Oh what a sight is this!

Da. Oh Saul, my king;
Thou dost demand this head; for a long time
Already hast thou sought it; here it is;

Sever it now . . . 'tis thine.

Sa. What do I hear? *

Oh David . . . David! God doth speak in thee. :

A God to-day hither hath brought thee to me . . .

Da. Yes, monarch: he who is the God alone;
 He who in Ela prompted me to meet,
 Although a stripling and yet inexpert,
 The menacing colossal arrogance
 Of fierce Goliath, clad in complete mail:
 That God who thence on thy tremendous arms
 Heap'd victory on victory; and who,
 In his designs always inscrutable,
 Chose, as an instrument, my obscure hand
 For signal exploits: hither now that God
 Doth usher me to thee with victory,
 Now as thou likest best, a simple warrior,
 Or leader of thy bands, if I deserve
 Such a distinction, take me. On the earth
 First let thy foes be strewn: by the keen breath
 Of northern blasts be all the clouds dispersed
 That gather round thy intercepted throne:
 Then shalt thou afterwards with death reward me.
 Nor one faint struggle, nor a single thought,
 Should my death cost thee. Thou, oh king, shalt
 say,

“Be David slain;” and Abner instantly
 Shall slay me—I will grasp nor sword nor shield;
 Within the palace of my absolute lord
 All weapons misbecome me except patience,
 Humility, and prayers, and passive love,
 And innocence. I ought, if God so will,
 Die as thy son, not as thy enemy.
 Thus was the son of the first ancestor

Of Israel's people ready to resign,
 On the great mount, his sacrificial blood ;
 Nor did a gesture or a word escape
 Belying perfect passiveness in him :
 Already had his father raised one hand
 To slay him, while he fondly kiss'd the other.—
 Saul gave my life ; Saul takes that life away :
 Through him I gain'd renown ; through him I lose it :
 He made me great, and now he makes me nothing.

Sa. Oh, what a thick mist from my aged eyes
 Those words disperse ! What voice sounds in my
 heart ?

David, thou speakest as a man of valour,
 And valiant were thy deeds ; but, blind with pride,
 Thou dar'dst despise me afterwards ; dar'dst raise
 Thyself above me ; to my praise pretend,
 And clothe thyself with my reflected light.
 And, were I not thy king, does it become
 A warrior, entering on the paths of fame,
 His hoary predecessor to despise ?
 Thou, great in all things, wert not so in this.
 Of thee the daughters of my people sung :
 " David the valiant, his ten thousands slew ;
 " Saul slew his thousands." To my inmost heart,
 David, thou woundedst me. Why saidst thou not,
 " Saul in his youth not only slew a thousand,
 " But thousand thousands : he the warrior is ;
 " Me he created."

Da. I indeed said this ;
 But those who to thy hearing gain'd access,
 More loudly cried : " Too powerful David is :
 " In all men's mouths, and in the hearts of many ;
 " If thou, Saul, slay him not, who will restrain him ?"

With less of art, and more of verity,
What said not Abner to the king? " Ah, David
" Too much surpasses me; hence I abhor him;
" Hence envy, fear him, hence I wish him dead."

Ab. Miscreant! the day that thou clandestinely
Didst with thy prophets trait'rously cabal;
When for thy monarch thou didst spread in secret
Infamous snare; when shelter thou didst seek
E'en in the bosom of Philistia's sons;
And with impure foes spending days profane,
Didst meanwhile with domestic traitors hold
A secret commerce: now do I perchance
Only allege this? or didst thou not do it?
At first, who more install'd thee than myself
Within thy monarch's heart? Who prompted him
To give thee Michal? Abner . . he alone . . .

Mi. 'Twas I, I at my father's hand obtain'd
David as consort; his I sought to be;
I, smitten by his virtue. He inspired
My earliest sighs; the idol of my heart,
My hope, my life he was, and he alone.
Although disguised in base obscurity,
Reduced to poverty, yet evermore
David had been more welcome to my heart
Than any proud king whom the east adores.

Sa. But thou, oh David, canst thou controvert
The charges Abner brings? Didst thou not seek
A shelter in Philistia? Didst thou not
Sow in my people seeds of black revolt?
Hast thou not plotted many times to take
Thy monarch's life, thy sacred father's life?

Da. Behold; this border of thy royal garment
Answers for me. Dost recognize it, thou?

Take it; examine it.

Sa. Give it to me.

'What do I see? 'Tis mine; assuredly . . .

'Whence didst thou take it? . . .

Da. From thyself I took it,
 With this my sword, from off thy royal robe,
 My own hands severed it.—Remember'st thou
 En-gedi? There, where barbarously thou
 Pursuedst me, a banish'd man, to death;
 There was I, in the cave, that from the fount
 Derives its name, a friendless fugitive:
 There, thou alone, thy warriors having station'd
 To guard the abrupt entrance of the cave,
 On downy pillows, in calm quietness,
 Didst close thine eyes in sleep . . . Yes, thou, oh
 heaven,
 With rancorous and with bloody thoughts inflamed,
 Didst slumber there! Thou seest how mighty God
 Defeats the schemes of human subtlety!
 There with impunity I might have slain thee,
 And by another issue have escaped.
 This border of thy robe sufficiently
 Proves this. Behold thee, thou a king,
 A haughty and a great one, in the midst
 Of arm'd battalions, fallen in the hands
 Of the proscribed calumniated youth . . .
 Abner, the valiant Abner, where was he? . . .
 Thus does he guard thy life! Thus serve his king!
 Thou seest in whom thou hast reposed thy trust;
 On whom thou hast thy indignation wreak'd,—
 Now art thou satisfied? Now hast thou not,
 Saul, of my heart proofs incontestable,
 Of my fidelity and innocence?

Not proofs persuasive of the little love,
Of the malignant and invidious rage,
And the precarious vigilance of Abner?

Sa. My son, thou hast conquer'd; . . . thou hast
wholly conquer'd.

Abner, do thou behold him, and be dumb.

Mi. Oh joy! . . .

Da. Oh father! . . .

Jo. Oh auspicious day!

Mi. My husband! . . .

Sa. Yes, this is a day of joy,
A day of restitution and of triumph.
I will that thou to-day command my armies;
Abner oppose not; since I will it so.
Let no contention 'twixt you two arise,
Except an emulation which shall slay
Most of Saul's enemies. Thou, Jonathan,
Beside the brother of thy heart shalt fight;
David to me is surety for thy life;
And thou art so for his.

Jo. When David leads
Our armies, God himself becomes our surety.

Mi. May God restore thee to me; he will save
thee . . .

Sa. Let this suffice. Before the fight begins
Come to the tent, oh son, a little while,
And rest thy wearied limbs. Thy spouse beloved
Shall sooth the long affliction of thy absence.
With her own hands meanwhile shall she provide
And minister thy food. Daughter, do thou
Repair in part (for thou alone canst do it)
The involuntary errors of thy father.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

David, Abner.

Ab. Behold me : at thy summons I appear
Ere scarce the king hath from the banquet risen.

Da. I wish'd to speak to thee in secret here.

Ab. Thou would'st perchance hear of the approaching fight?...

Da. And at the same time say, that thou art not
Subordinate to me ; that both alike
Our people and our lawful king we serve,
And Israel's mighty God. Let not our breasts
Harbour another thought.

Ab. I for our king,
From whose blood I descend, had in the camp
Already brandish'd my ensanguined sword
Before the shrill twang of thy sling was heard.

Da. The monarch's blood runs not within my
veins :

To all my deeds are known ; I boast them not ;
Abner, thou know'st them.—In forgetfulness
Let them be buried : only recollect
Thine own : and, emulous of thy former fame,
Seek only to surpass thyself to-day.

Ab. I hitherto believed myself the leader :
David was not here then ; I ventured hence
To order all things for the victory :
Hear what I should have done had I commanded.—
Full in our front, from north to south, the camp
Of the Philistines fills the valley's length.

Behind it rise thick bushes ; 'tis defended
 By lofty banks in front : eastward 'tis flank'd
 By a not lofty hill, of gentle slope
 Towards the camp, but rough, precipitous,
 On the opposite descent ; an ample outlet
 Lies amid mountains to the west, through which
 By a vast plain the traveller may go,
 Exempt from hindrance, to the murmuring ocean.
 Here, if we thither can decoy our foes,
 The victory will be ours.

But, to accomplish that, 'tis needful first
 To feign retreat. In three battalions form'd,
 If we towards the valley's left side bend,
 We shall in front encounter their right flank.
 The first battalion with forced march advances,
 And seems to fly ; the second, more supine,
 Remains behind, in thin, disorder'd ranks,
 A sure temptation to our enemies.
 Meanwhile, a band conspicuous for its valour
 The rugged hill towards the east has gain'd,
 And on the rear of the invading host
 Reissues. Thus in front is it enclosed,
 Behind, transversely : and behold we make
 Of it, a dreadful, universal carnage.

Da. Equally wise and valorous art thou.
 And nothing, Abner, should we dare to change
 Of thy design. Valour, wherever found,
 Obtains my praise. A soldier I will be,
 And not a leader : and my coming here
 Shall, by the addition of a sword alone,
 Alter thy battle.

Ab. David is the leader ;
 David is master of our armies. 'Who

Combats, compared with him ?

Da. Who less indeed
Should stoop to jealousy than Abner, since
He is so highly gifted ? Excellent,
However I behold it, is thy scheme.
Myself and Jonathan beside the tent
Of Saul shall combat ; further, towards the north,
Uz shall advance ; with thousand chosen men
Sadoc the eastern eminence shall gain ;
And thou, with greatest numbers, shall command
The body of the army.

Ab. This to thee
Belongs : it is the place of honour.

Da. Hence
I place thee there.—As yet the sun ascends :
Thou shalt keep all in steady preparation ;
But till the fourth hour of the afternoon
Be not the trumpets heard. Perceiv'st thou not
A violent west wind blows ; the dazzling sun
And driven dust will, towards the close of day,
Assist our enterprize.

Ab. Thou speakest wisely.

Da. Now go, command, and do not from thyself,
With base and courtly artifice, of which
Thou should'st be ignorant, avert that praise,
Which, as a captain, thou so well deservest.

SCENE THE SECOND.

David.

Da. The order of the fight is wise and subtle.—
But if he have not gain'd his soldiers' hearts,
What boots the forecast of a general ?

Of this alone is Abner destitute ;
 And this God grants to me. To-day we conquer ;
 To-morrow once more do I leave the king ;
 For never in his sight can there be peace
 For me . . . What do I say ? New victory
 Would be ascribed to me as a new crime.

SCÈNE THE THIRD.

Michal, David.

Mi. David, hast thou not heard ? My father scarce
 Rose from a jovous banquet, when towards him
 Abner advanced, and spake to him an instant.
 I enter'd, he retired ; I found the king
 No longer what he was.

Da. But yet, what said he ?
 What couldest thou infer ? . . .

Mi. Erewhile was he
 Devoted to our cause ; with us he wept ;
 Alternately embraced us ; and from us,
 As if in his defence, he prophesied
 A race of future heroes. He appear'd
 To us, as he said this, more than a father ;
 More than a king he now appears to me.

Da. Ah ! do not weep, oh wife, before thy time :
 Saul is our king ; his will in us must be
 Accomplish'd. So that he to-day obtain
 The battle, let him 'gainst myself to-morrow
 Resume his cruel thoughts : I will resume
 My abject state, my bitter banishment,
 My fugitive and apprehensive life.
 My true and only death is thus to leave thee :
 And yet I ought to do it . . . Ah vain hopes !

Ah nuptial ties for thee, how inauspicious !
Another consort, that of which I rob thee,
To thee had given, a prosperous royal state.
Wretch that I am ! . . Nor canst thou ever make me,
(Thy ever fugitive and homeless consort,)
The father of a numerous blooming offspring.

Mi. Ah no ! we never shall again be parted ;
No one will dare to rend thee from my breast.
I never shall return, no, never more,
To that disconsolate life which I dragg'd on
Deprived of thee : rather than so return
May I become an inmate of the grave.
I languish'd in that palace of despair,
Alone and weeping, through the tedious days ;
The shades of night with horrible dreams were
fraught.

Now I beheld my cruel father's sword
Suspended o'er thy head ; thy voice I heard
Persuasive, weeping, supplicating, such
As might from breasts of adamant dislodge
Deep-rooted hate and fell obduracy ;
And yet the barbarous Saul, in spite of this,
Plunged in thy heart the dagger. Now I saw thee
'Mid secret labyrinths of low-brow'd caves,
Pillow'd thy body on unyielding flint ;
While at the motion of a rustling leaf
Thy faint heart trembled ; and thou sought'st another,
And thence another, yet in vain to find
A place of rest, or quietness, or friends :
Sick, anxious, weary, worn with parching thirst . .
And ravening hunger . . . Can I represent
My pangs, my apprehensions, and my woes ?—
No more, no, never will I leave thee, never.

Da. Thou torturest my heart : ah cease : . . This day

Is consecrated to blood, and not to tears.

Mi. Provided that an obstacle to-day
Arise not to thy fighting, I fear not
The fight on thy account. Thou hast a shield
Proof against all assaults, Almighty God :
But I am fearful lest perfidious Abner,
On thy account, frustrate, or intercept
The victory to-day.

Da. And what, did Saul
Seem to thee doubtfully to trust to me
To-day the conduct of the enterprize?

Mi. I heard not that ; but sternly did he frown,
And whisper'd to himself I know not what
Of trait'rous priests, of strangers in the camp,
Of simulated virtue . . . Broken, dark,
Mournful, tremendous words, to her who is
The wife of David and the child of Saul.

Da. See him : we will be heard.

Mi. Just God, I pray thee,
Succour to-day thy consecrated servant :
Confound blasphemers ; reillumine my father ;
Protect my husband ; and defend thy people.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Saul, Jonathan, David, Michal.

Jon. Ah come, beloved father ; to thy thoughts
Allow a little respite : the pure air
Will bring thee some refreshment ; come, and sit
A little while among thy children here.

Sa. What is it that you say ?

Mi. Beloved father! ..

Sa. Who, who are ye? .. Who speaks of pure air here? ..

This! .. 'tis a thick impenetrable gloom;
A land of darkness; and the shades of death ..
Ah see! more nearly it approaches me? ..
A fatal wreath of blood surrounds the sun ...
Heard'st thou the death-notes of ill-omen'd birds
With loud laments the vocal air resounds
That smite my ears, compelling me to weep.
But what, do ye weep also? ..

Jon. Mighty God
Of Israel, dost thou thus thy face avert
From wretched Saul? Is he, thy servant once,
Abandon'd to the adversary thus?

Mi. Father, thy much-loved daughter is beside thee.

If thou art cheerful, she is also cheerful;
She, if thou weapest, weeps... But wherefore now
Should we shed tears? Pleasure hath reappeared.

Sa. Thou would'st say, David. Ah! .. Why doth not he

Also embrace me with my other children?

Da. Oh father! .. I have been restrain'd by fear
Of importuning thee. Ah! why canst thou
Not read my heart? I evermore am thine.

Sa. Thou lovest then ... the house ... of Saul?

Da. I love it!

Oh heaven! Dear as the apple of mine eye
To me is Jonathan; I neither know,
Nor heed a peril in the world for thee;
Let my wife, if she can, say with what love,
And how much love, I love her

Sa. Yet thyself
Thou mightily dost prize.

Da. I, prize myself . . .
No despicable soldier in the camp,
In court thy son-in-law, I deem myself;
But nothing, nothing in the sight of God.

Sa. Incessantly to me of God thou speakest;
Yet thou well knowest that the crafty rage,
Cruel, tremendous, of perfidious priests,
Has for a long time sever'd me from God.
Dost thou thus name him to insult me?

Da. I
Name him, to give him glory. Why dost thou
Believe that he no longer is with thee?
He doth not dwell with him who loves him not :
But doth he ever fail to succour him
Who oft invokes him, and who hath reposed
In him implicit trust? He to the throne
Appointed thee; and on that throne he keeps thee :
And if in him, in him exclusively
Thou dost confide, he's thine, and thou art his.

Sa. Who speaks of heaven? . . Is he in snowy vest
Enrobed who thus his sacred hip unseals?
Let us behold him . . Thou'rt a warrior; thou
Graspest the sword : . . approach, and let me see
If David thus or Samuel doth accost me.—
What sword is this? 'Tis not the same, methinks,
Which I, with my own hands, on thee bestow'd.

Da. This is the sword that my poor sling acquired;
The sword that over me in Elah hung
Threatening my life; in fierce Goliath's hands
I saw it flash a horrid glare of death

Before my eyes ; he grasp'd it ; but 't bears
Not mine, but his coagulated blood.

Sa. Was not that sword, a consecrated thing,
In Nob, within the tabernacle hung ?
Was it not wrapp'd within the mystic Ephod,
And thus from all unhallow'd eyes conceal'd,
Devoted to the Lord of hosts for ever ?

Da. 'Tis true ; but . . .

Sa. Whence didst thou obtain it then ?
Who dared to give it thee ?

Da. I will confess.
Powerless and fugitive to Nob I came :
Wherefore I fled thou knowest. Every path
Was crowded with unhappy wretches ; I,
Defenceless, found myself at every step
Within the jaws of death. With humble brow
I kneel'd within the tabernacle, where
The spirit of God descends : and there, these arms
(Which if a living man might to his side
Refit them, David surely was that man)
Myself demanded of the priest.

Sa. And he . .

Da. Gave them to me.

Sa. He was . .

Da. Ahimelech.

Sa. Perfidious traitor ! . . . Vilc ! . . . Where is the
altar ? . .

Oh rage . . Ah, all are miscreants ! traitors all ! . .
Oh foes to God ! are ye his ministers ? . .
Black souls in vestments white ! . . Where is the axe ?
Where is the altar ? . . Let him be destroy'd ! . .
Where is the offering ? . . I myself will slay him.

Mi. Father!

Jon. What mean these words? Where dost thou fly?

Be pacified, I pray thee: there are not
Or altars here or victims: in the priests
Respect that God who hears thee evermore.

Sa. Who thus restrains me? Who resists me thus?
Who forces me to sit?

Jon. Father ..

Da. Ah thou,
Great God of Israel, do thou succour him:
Thy servant kneels to thee, and prays for this.

Sa. I am bereft of peace: the sun, the earth,
My children, and my power of thought, all, all
Are taken from me! .. Ah unhappy Saul!
Who doth console thee? Who is now the guide,
The prop of thy bewilder'd feebleness?
Thy children are all mute; they scowl on thee ..
And of the doting and infirm old man
They only wish the death: nothing attracts
My children's wishes but the diadem,
Whose weight thy hoary head but ill sustains.
Wrest it at once: and at the same time sever
From this now tremulous and decaying form
Your father's palsied head .. Ah wretched state!
Better were death! I wish to die! ..

Mi. Oh father!
We all desire thy life. We each of us
Would die ourselves to rescue thee from death.

Jon. Now since in tears his fury is dissolved,
Brother, do thou, to recompose his soul,
Exert thy voice. So many times already
Hast thou rapt him with thy celestial songs

In calm oblivion.

Mi. Yes ; thou seest now
The respiration in his panting breast
Almost subsides : his eye balls, late so fierce,
So hot and dry, swim in balsamic tears :
Now is the time to lend him thy assistance.

Da. May God in mercy speak, to him through me.

1.

Omnipotent, eternal, infinite,
Thou who dost govern each created thing ;
Thou, who from nothing mad'st me by thy might,
Blest with a soul that dares to thee take wing ;
Thou who canst pierce the abyss of endless night,
And all its mysteries into day-light bring ;
The universe doth tremble at thy nod,
And sinners prostrate fall at the out-stretch'd arm
of God.

2.

Oft on the gorgeous blazing wings ere now
Of thousand cherubim wert thou reveal'd ;
Oft did thy pure divinity endow
Thy people's shepherd in the martial field.
To him a stream of eloquence wert thou ;
Thou wert his sword, his wisdom, and his shield.
From thy bright throne, oh God, bestow one ray
To cleave the gathering clouds that intercept the
day.

3.

In tears and darkness we . .

Sam. Hear I the voice
Of David? . . From a mortal lethargy
It seems to wake me, and to me displays
The cheering radiance of my early years.

David.

1.

“ Who comes, who comes, unseem, yet heard?
“ A sable cloud of dust appear’d,
“ Driven by the eastern blast.—
“ But it is burst; and from its womb
“ A thousand brandish’d swords illumine
“ The track through which it past.

2.

“ Saul, as a tower, his forehead rears,
“ His head a flaming circlet wears;
“ The earth beneath his feet
“ Echoes with tramp of horse and men;
“ The sea, the sky, the hills, the plain,
“ The warlike sounds repeat.

“ In awful majesty doth Saul appear;
“ Horsemen and chariots from before him fly;
“ Chill’d by his presence is each heart with fear;
“ And god-like terrors lighten in his eye.

1.

“ Ye sons of Ammon, late so proud,
“ Where is the scorn, the insults loud,
“ Ye raised against our host?

“ Your corpses more than fill the plain ;
 “ The ample harvest of your slain
 “ Invalidates your boast.

2.

“ See what it is thus to depend
 “ On gods unable to defend.—
 “ But wherefore from afar
 “ Hear I another trumpet sound ?
 “ 'Tis Saul's :—he levels with the ground
 “ All Edom's sons of war.

“ Thus Moab, **Soba**, by his arms laid low,
 “ With impious Amalek, united fall :
 “ Saul, like a stream fed by dissolving snow,
 “ Defeats, disperses, overwhelms them all.”

Sa. This is the voice of my departed years,
 That from the tomb to glory now recalls me.
 I live again in my victorious youth
 When I hear this. . . What do I say ? Alas ! . .
 Should cries of war be now address'd to me ?
 Oblivion, indolence, and peace, invite
 The old man to themselves.

Da. Let peace be sung.

“ Weary and thirsty, see he lies
 “ Beside his native stream ;
 “ God's champion, whose past victories
 “ Wake many a glorious dream.

“ The glossy laurel's evergreen
 “ Doth screen his head from heat ;

- " His children all around him seen,
 " His sighs and smiles repeat.
 " They weep and smile, then smile and weep,
 " With sympathy endued ;
 " And still a strict accordance keep
 " To every varying mood.
 " His daughter's gentle hand unfits
 " His crested helm and sword ;
 " His consort fond beside him sits,
 " Embracing her loved lord.
 " Another doth clear water bring
 " From the pure ambient flood,
 " To cleanse his stately brows, where cling
 " Commingled dust and blood.
 " A cloud of odorous flowers she spreads,
 " Which breathe their perfumes near ;
 " And on his honour'd hand *she* sheds
 " The duteous filial tear.
 " But why sits one apart reclined,
 " In pensive mood alone ?
 " Alas, she mourns that others find
 " A task, while she has none.
 " But different thoughts, with eager haste,
 " Attract the band of boys ;
 " Till his turn comes to be embraced,
 " One son himself employs

“ To make the blood-encrusted blade

“ From spot and blemish clear :

“ With envy fired, another said,

“ ‘ When shall I poise that spear ?

“ ‘ That ponderous lance when shall I wield,

“ ‘ That now defies my strength ?’

“ Another grasps the blazon’d shield,

“ And stalks behind its length.”

“ Tears of sweet surprise,

“ From forth the swimming eyes

“ Of Saul are seen to roll :

“ For of his blooming race,

“ So full of royal grace,

“ He knows that he’s the soul.

“ The pleasure how entire,

“ How happy is the sire,

“ Whose waking thoughts inspire

“ Affections so sincere !—

“ But now the day is o’er,

“ The zephyrs breathe no more ;

“ And sleep’s soft powers restore

“ The monarch we revere.”

Sa. Happy the father of a race like this !
 Oh peace of mind ! . . how precious are thy gifts
 To wretches like myself by thee deserted ! . .
 I feel ineffably through all my veins
 Balsamic dews of sweet composure steal . .
 But what pretendest thou ? To make Saul vile

Amid domestic ease? Does valiant Saul
Now lie an useless implement of war?

David. “

“ The king reposes, but heroic dreams
“ With fearful majesty before him glance,
“ Pregnant with death and visionary themes.

“ Behold, transfix’d with his victorious lance,
“ The conquer’d tyrant of the haughty foes;
“ An awful shade in spectral gloom advance.

“ Behold a flash that instantaneous glows..
“ It is Saul’s brandish’d sword, that no man spares,
“ The weak and strong confounding with its blows.—

“ The terrible lion thus sometimes forbears
“ To make the forest with his cries resound,
“ For even he in sleep his strength repairs;

“ But not the silence of his den profound,
“ Can courage to the afflicted flocks restore;
“ Or make the swain with less fear look around,
“ For well he knows that he will prowl once more.

“ The monarch is roused from his slumbers,
“ Arms, arms, he imperiously cries.
“ They are vanish’d—the enemies numbers;
“ What champion his valour defies?

“ I see, I see a track of terrible fire,
“ To which perforce the hostile squadrons yield.
“ Before the arms of Israel they retire,
“ Which, black with hostile gore, possess the field.

“ The winged thunderbolt huge stones doth shower,
 “ And far less promptly doth the foe retreat
 “ Than our dread sovereign in his mighty power
 “ Pursue him, and his overthrow complete.

“ Like a proud eagle, his audacious flight,
 “ Impt with immortal wings, towards the pole
 “ He aims. His eyes are like the lightning bright ;
 “ His talons God’s own thunderbolts controul,

“ To annihilate those impious sons of earth,
 “ Who in false temples have false gods adored ;
 “ Whose impure gods to impure rites gave birth,
 “ Who dare compare themselves with Israel’s Lord.

“ Long, long have I pursued his ardent path ;
 “ Now it behoves me once more to pursue
 “ His foes on earth ; with heaven-directed wrath
 “ To trample down and crush Philistia’s crew ;

“ And with the assistance of the God of hosts,
 “ Prove that, as he, so I maintain his laws ;
 “ And prove that now the camp of Israel boasts
 “ Two swords resistless in a righteous cause.”

Sa. Who, who thus boasts ? Is there, except my
 sword,
 Which I unsheathe, another in the camp ?
 He’s a blasphemer, let him perish, he
 Who dares defy it.

Mi. Ah forbear : Oh Heaven ! . . .

Jon. Father, what would’st thou do ?

Da. Unhappy king !

Mi. Ah fly! . . . Ah fly! With difficulty we
From violence restrain him.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Jonathan, Saul, Michal.

Mi. Stop; oh stop,
Beloved father!

Jon. I beseech thee stop.

Sa. Who thus restrains me? Who presumes to
do it? . . .

Where is my sword? Restore my sword at once . .

Jon. Do thou retire with us, beloved father :
I shall not suffer thee to advance a step.
Behold, thy children now are all alone :
Return with us to thy pavilion; now
Thou needest quietness. Ah come! . . Refrain
From causeless rage; thy children stand around thee.

Mi. And they shall never, never quit thy presence.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Jonathan, Michal.

Mi. Jonathan, tell me; to my father's tent
May David now return?

Jon. Ah no! with him
Saul is not reconciled, although he have
Regain'd his reason; but fell jealousy
Hath round his heart too intricately twined
Her blighting fibres; slow will be his cure.
Return to David thou, and leave him not.

Mi. Alas! . . . Who is more wretched than myself?

I have so well conceal'd him, that no man
Will ever find him: to this hiding-place
I now return to him.

Jon. Oh heaven! behold
My poor distracted father once more comes:
He never finds a resting-place.

Mi. Ah me . .
What shall I say to him? . . I will retire . .

SCENE THE SECOND.

Saul, Michal, Jonathan.

Sa. Who flies at my approach? Thou, Michal,
thou?

Mi. My lord . .

Sa. Where, where is David?

Mi. . . I know not . .

Sa. Thou knowest not? . .

Jon. Oh father! . .

Sa. Seek him then;
Go, bring him hither quickly.

Mi. I pursue him? . .
Whither . . ah . . whither?

Sa. 'Twas thy king that spake,
And hast thou not obey'd him?

SCENE THE THIRD.

Saul, Jonathan.

Sa. Jonathan,
Lov'st thou thy father?

Jon. Father, yes, I love thee:
But, loving thee, I also love thy glory:
Hence sometimes I oppose, far as a son

Ought to oppose them, thy unjust desires.

Sa. Often thy father's arm dost thou restrain;
But thou dost turn against thyself that sword
Which thou avertest from another's breast.
Yes, yes, defend that David to the utmost;
Shortly will he . . . Dost thou not hear a voice
That in thy heart cries, "David will be king!"
—David! — He shall be immolated first.

Jon. And doth not God, with a more terrible voice,
Cry in thy heart, "David is my beloved!
"He is the chosen of the Lord of hosts?"
Doth not each act of his confirm this truth?
Was not the frantic and invidious rage
Of Abner silenced by his mere approach?
And thou, when thou re-enterest in thyself,
Dost thou not find that, only at his presence,
All thy suspicions vanish like a cloud
Before the sun? And dost thou fondly dream,
When the malignant spirit visits thee,
That I restrain thy arm? Thy God restrains it.
Scarcely wilt thou have levell'd at his breast
The misadventurous sword, when thou wilt be
Forced to withdraw it suddenly: in tears
Thou thyself prostrate at his feet wilt fall;
Yes, father, thou repentant: for thou art
Not impious . . .

Sa. But too, too true thy words.
A strange inexplicable mystery
This David is to me. No sooner I
In Elah had beheld him than he pleased^{me}
My eyes; but never, never won my heart.
When I might almost be disposed to love him,
A fierce repulsion shoots athwart my breast,

And weans me from him. Scarcely do I wish,
 Scarcely resolve his death, than, if I see him,
 Me he disarms, and with such wonder fills me,
 That in his presence I become a nothing . .
 Ah ! this is surely, this the vengeance is.
 Of the inscrutable almighty hand !
 Tremendous hand ! I now begin to know thee . .
 But what, why should I needlessly explain
 Common events by superhuman causes ?
 God have I ne'er offended : this is then
 The vengeance of the priests. Yes, David is
 An instrument of sacerdotal malice.
 Expiring Samuel he beheld in Rama :
 The implacable old man to him address'd
 His dying words. Who knows, who knows if he
 Upon the head of this my enemy
 Pour'd not the sacred oil with which before
 My brows he had anointed ? Perhaps thou knowest . .
 Speak . . yes, thou knowest : . . I conjure thee, speak.

Jon. Father, I know not : but if it were so,
 Should not I, equally with thee, esteem
 Myself in this offended ? Am not I
 Thy eldest son ? Dost thou not mean this throne
 For me, when thou art gathered to thy fathers ?
 If I then do not do it, who should dare
 To make complaints at this ? In fortitude
 David surpasses me ; in virtue, sense,
 In every quality : and as the more
 His worth surpasses mine, the more I love him.
 Now, should that power that gives and takes away
 Kingdoms at will, bestow this throne on David,
 What more conciliatory evidence
 Of heaven's interposition can I ask ?

He is more worthy of that throne than I :
 And God hath summon'd him to lofty deeds,
 The shepherd of his people.—But meanwhile
 I swear, that he has always been to thee,
 A faithful subject and a loyal son.
 Now to that God to whom it doth belong,
 The future yield : and against God, meanwhile,
 Against the truth, ah, harden not thy heart.
 If a divinity in Samuel spake not,
 How could an undesigning, weak old man,
 Half in the grave already, such effects
 Produce by David's means? That mystery
 Of love and hatred which thou feel'st for David;
 That apprehension at a battle's name,
 (A terror hitherto to thee unknown,)
 Whence, Saul, can it proceed? Is there a power
 On earth producing such effects as these? . .

Sa. What language dost thou hold? A son of Saul
 Art thou?—Feel'st thou no interest for the throne?—
 Foresee'st thou not the cruel stratagems
 By which the usurper will defend his claim?
 My house will be abolish'd, from the roots
 Torn up, by him who seizes on my sceptre.
 Thy sons, thy brothers, and thyself destroy'd . .
 Not one of Saul's descendants will remain . .
 Oh guilty and insatiable thirst
 Of power, what horrors can'st thou not produce?
 To reign, the brother immolates the brother;
 Mothers their children; wives their consorts slay;
 The son his father! Sacrilegious throne!
 Thou art the seat of blood and cruelty!
Jon. Has man a shield against the sword of
 heaven?

Not menaces or prayers can turn aside
 The wrath of God omnipotent, who oft
 The proud abases, and exalts the humble.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Saul, Jonathan, Abner, Ahimelech, Soldiers.

Ab. King, if thy presence I behold once more,
 Ere streams of hostile blood by my means flow,
 To this by mighty reasons am I urged.
 David, the champion, the invincible,
 He who our victory or defeat decides,
 David is fled, and none knows whither fled.
 Scarce is an hour now wanting to the time
 Appointed for attack : now, hear'st thou not
 The warriors, chafing with impatient ardour,
 Fill with loud cries the air ; the earth resound,
 Beaten with iron hoof of fiery steeds :
 Howlings and neighings, and the blaze of helms,
 And brandish'd swords, and fulminating shouts,
 Enough to make the veriest coward valiant ;
 Yet who sees David ? Who brings tidings of him ?—
 Behold, (the authentic succour of the Almighty !)
 Behold, who in the camp stands in his place.
 This man, in soft, white, sacerdotal stole
 Enveloped, having gain'd the camp by stealth,
 Tremblingly slunk beside the Benjamites.
 Behold him ; hear from him the lofty cause
 Which to such peril guides him.

Ahi. I will speak it,
 If not forbidden by the king's displeasure.

Sa. The king's displeasure ! Thou dost then de-
 serve it ! . . .

Traitor, and who art thou? .. It seems to me
That I should know thee well. Art thou not one
Of that fantastical and haughty flock
Of Rama's fanatics?

Ahi. I wear the ephod :
I, of the Levites chief, to holy Aaron,
In that high ministry, to which the Lord
Elected him, after a long descent
Of other consecrated priests, succeed.
Near to the sacred ark in Nob I'm station'd :
Th' ark of the covenant in former times
Stood in the centre of the camp ; but now
'Tis deem'd too much, if e'en clandestinely
That camp is enter'd by God's minister :
Where Saul is monarch, a strange visitant
The priest is held ; but he is not so, no,
Where Israel fights ; if still, as formerly,
Through God we triumph. Dost thou not know
me?

What wonder ? Dost thou better know thyself?—
Thou hast withdrawn thy footsteps from God's path ;
And I within the tabernacle dwell,
Where dwells the great Jehovah, there, where thou
For a long time, oh Saul, hast not been seen.
I tell thee, king, I am Ahimelech.

Sa. That name proclaims thee, as thou art, a
traitor :

Now art thou recognized. Before my sight
Thou comest opportunely. Now confess,
Art thou not he, who to the banish'd David
Gav'st an asylum, nourishment, and safety,
Deliverance and arms ? And say what arms !
Goliath's sacred sword, which, dedicate

To God, within the tabernacle hung,
 Whence, with profane hand thou removed'st it,
 And girded'st it on the perfidious foe
 Of thy sole lord and king?—Thou comest, miscreant,
 What doubt is there, with treason to the camp? . . .

Ahi. Assuredly I come there to betray thee ;
 Since on thy arms I come to entreat God
 For victory, which he to thee denies ;
 Yes, I am he, that, with benignant hand,
 Assisted David. But who is that David ?
 Of the king's daughter is not he the husband ?
 Not the most valiant 'mid thy men of valour ?
 Not the most graceful, most humane, must just,
 Of Israel's sons ? Say, is he not in war
 Thy shield, and thy defender ? And in peace,
 Is he not in thy palace, with his songs,
 The master of thy heart ? The love of maidens,
 The people's joy, the terror of our foes ?
 Such, such was he that I presumed to rescue.
 And thou thyself, didst thou not erewhile chuse him
 For the first honours ? Not select his arm
 To guide thy battles ? To bring back once more
 The shout of victory to the camp ? To chase
 That terror of defeat, which in thy heart
 Thy God hath placed ? If thou condemnest me,
 Thou, at the same time, dost condemn thyself.

Sa. Whence, whence in you springs pity ? whence
 in you
 Inveterate priests, revengeful, thirsty ever
 For human blood ? To Samuel did it seem
 crime unpardonable that I slew not
 ? Amalekitish king, with arms in hand,
 Taken in flight ; a mighty king, a warrior,

Of ardent generous temper, and profuse
 Of his own life-blood in his people's service.
 Unhappy king ! dragg'd in my presence, he
 Came manacled ; yet he preserved, though van-
 quish'd,

A noble pride, as far from insolence,
 As from all abjectness. Of courage guilty
 To cruel Samuel he appear'd : three times
 In his defenceless bosom did he plunge,
 With sacerdotal hand, the reeking sword.
 These are your triumphs, these, vile fanatics.
 But he who dares to lift his haughty brow
 Against his lawful monarch, he, in you,
 Finds an asylum, a support, a shield,
 All other objects occupy your hearts
 More than the altar. Who are, who are ye ?
 A selfish, cruel, and malignant tribe,
 Who yourselves shelter'd, at our dangers laugh,
 And kirtled in effeminate robes, presume
 To govern us who sweat in cumbrous mail :
 Us, who, 'mid blood-shed, apprehension, death,
 Lead, for our wives, our children, and yourselves,
 Lives of perpetuated wretchedness.
 Cowards, less dignified than prating gossips,
 Would you with lithe wands, and fantastic hymns,
 O'er us, and o'er our weapons, arbitrate.

Ahi. And thou, who art thou ? of the earth a
 king :

But in God's sight who reigns ?—Examine, Saul,
 Thyself ; thou only art crown'd nothingness.—
 I, by myself am nothing ; but I am
 A thunderbolt, a whirlwind, and a tempest,
 If God descends in me ; that mighty God

Who fashion'd thee ; who scarcely bends his eye
On thee, and where is Saul ?—It ill fits thee
To plead the cause of Agag ; foolishly
Dost thou pursue him in forbidden paths.
For a perverse king, save the hostile sword,
Is there a punishment ? And does a sword
Smite unpermitted by Almighty God ?
God writes his vengeance in adamant ;
Nor to Philistia's, less than Israel's sons,
Does he commit them.—Tremble, Saul : I see
Already in a sable cloud on high,
Death's dreadful angel poised on fiery wings.
Already with one hand hath he unsheathed
The pitiless, retributory sword ;
And with the other, from thy guilty head
He plucks thy hoary tresses : tremble, Saul.—
There is who doth impel thee to destruction :
'Tis he ; this Abner, instrument of Satan ;
He, who hath poison'd with suspicions vile
Thy aged heart ; he who hath dwindled thee
From a crown'd warrior to a less than child.
Thou, thou infatuate man, dost now remove
The only true and steadfast prop of thee
And of thy house. Where is the house of Saul ?
On quicksands it is built ; it shakes already ;
It falls ; it moulders into dust ; 'tis gone.—
Sa. Prescient of my calamities art thou,
And not so of thy own. Hast thou not seen,
Ere to the camp thou camest, that death here
Awaited thee ? this I predict ; and soon
Shall Abner's hand this prophecy fulfil.—
My faithful Abner go, and change at once
All the arrangements of the impious David :

For every one of them conceals a plot.
 To-morrow fight we with the rising sun,
 The beauteous day-star, of my hardihood
 Shall be the witness. I am now aware,
 That from malignity the thought arose
 In David's breast, to chuse the afternoon
 For the attack, as most indicative
 Of my declining arm; but we shall see.—
 I feel my martial spirits braced afresh
 By thy rebukes; to-morrow I am leader:
 The entire day will be inadequate
 To the great slaughter which I shall inflict.
 Abner, now quickly from my presence drag
 This miscreant, and dispatch him.

Jon. I beseech thee,
 Father, reflect a little . . .

Sa. Hold thy peace.—
 He shall be slain; and his unworthy blood
 Shall fall on the Philistines.

Ab. Death is his
 Already . . .

Sa. But to satisfy my vengeance
 He only is too little. Let Nob feel
 That vengeance also; let it smite, consume,
 Servants, and cattle, mothers, houses, babes,
 And to the desolating winds disperse
 All the flagitious race. Thy priests may now
 Exclaim with truth, "There is a Saul!"—My hand,
 So oft by you provoked to homicide,
 Never smote you: from hence, and hence alone
 You scorn that hand.

Ahi. No king can hinder me .
 From dying like a just man; whence my death

Will be as welcome as it is illustrious,
 Yours, for a long time, by Almighty God
 Hath been irrevocably seal'd. By swords,
 Yet not in battle, not by hostile swords,
 Abner and thou shall both be vilely slain.
 Let me go hence.—I have at last address'd
 God's final sentence to a reprobate,
 And he is deaf: my mission is accomplish'd:
 I have lived faithful, faithful shall I die.

Sa. Quick let him hence be dragg'd to punishment;
 To agonizing and protracted death.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Saul, Jonathan.

Jon. Ill-advised king, what art thou doing? pause . .

Sa. Must I once more command thee to be silent?—
 Art thou a warrior? thou a son of mine?
 Art thou a champion of the Israelites?
 Go, go; return to Nob; and there fill thou
 His empty seat: worthy art thou alone
 To live in indolence with drowsy priests,
 Not 'mid the tumults of grim-visaged war,
 Not 'mid the lofty cares of royalty . . .

Jon. I also at thy side in combat fierce
 Have overcome, in multitudes, thy foes.
 But this, which now thou dost presume to shed,
 Is sacerdotal, not Philistine blood.
 Alone thou standest in a fight so impious . . .

Sa. I am alone sufficient for the contest,
 Whate'er that contest be. Do thou to-morrow
 Join the encounter with reluctant steps:

I only shall be Saul. What then avail
David or Jonathan? Saul is the leader.

Jon. Beside thee shall I fight. Ah! may I fall
Lifeless before thine eyes, rather than see
That which awaits thy reprobated blood!

Sa. And what awaits it? death? death in the
field?
This is a monarch's death.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Michal, Saul, Jonathan.

Sa. Thou, without David? . . .

Mi. I cannot find him . . .

Sa. I will find him.

Mi. He

Perhaps is far distant; he avoids thy anger . . .

Sa. Though he had wings my anger should o'er-
take him.

Woe, if in battle he presents himself:

Woe, if to-morrow, when my foes are conquer'd,
Thou bring'st him not to me!

Mi. Oh Heaven!

Jon. Ah father . . .

Sa. I have no children.—Quickly, Jonathan,
Resume thy place among the troops. And thou,
Seek and find David.

Mi. Ah! . . with thee . . .

Sa. In vain.

Jon. Father, shall I fight far from thee?

Sa. From me

Be all of you afar. Ye, all of you,

Vie with each other in betraying me.
Go, I command it : quickly fly from hence.

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

Saul.

Sa. I to myself am left.—Myself alone,
(Unhappy king !) myself alone I dread not.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

David, Michal.

Mi. Come forth, my consort ; come : the night
already
Is far advanced . . . Listen, what mingled sounds
Issue from yonder camp ? The fierce encounter
To-morrow's dawn will witness.—Round the tent
Where sleeps my father every sound is hush'd.
Behold ; the heavens themselves assist thy flight :
The moon is setting, and a black cloud veils
Her latest rays. Let us depart : no one
Watches our footsteps now, let us depart :
We may descend the mountain by this slope,
And God, where'er we go, will be our guide.
Da. Oh spouse, the better portion of myself,
While Israel is preparing for attack,
Can it be true that I prepare for flight ?
And what is death that I should thus avoid it ?
I will remain : let Saul, if he will, slay me ;
So that I first in numbers slay the foe.

Mi. Ah ! thou know'st not : already hath the rage
Of Saul in blood his lifted arm embued.
Ahimelech, discover'd here, hath fallen
The victim of his violence already.

Da. What do I hear ? Hath he his unsheathed
sword
Turn'd on defenceless priests ? Ill-fated Saul ! ..

Mi. Thou must hear more. The monarch gave
himself

Cruel command to Abner, that, if thou
In battle should'st be seen, our champions should
Against thee turn their arms.

Da. And Jonathan,
My friend, bears this ?

Mi. Oh Heaven ! what can he do ?
He too endured his father's rage ; and ran
Distractedly 'mid combatants to die.
Now, thou seest clearly, thou canst not stay here :
Thou art forced to yield ; to fly from hence ; and
wait,

Or that my father change, or that he bend
Beneath the weight of years . . . Ah, cruel father !
Thou thyself, thou forcest thy wretched daughter
To wish the fatal day . . . But yet, oh no,
Thy death I do not wish for : live in peace ;
Live if thou canst ; 'twill be enough for me
T' enjoy for ever my loved consort's presence . . .
Ah, come then ; let us go . . .

Da How much I grieve
To leave the fight ! I hear an unknown voice
Cry in my heart, " For Israel and his king
" The terrible day is come." .. Could I ! .. But no :
The innocent blood of sacred ministers

Was here pour'd out: the camp is now impure,
 Contaminate is the soil; the face of God
 Is hence averted: David now no more
 Can combat here. It is my duty, then,
 To yield awhile to thy anxiety,
 And provident love.—But thou too yield to mine . .
 Ah! suffer me alone . . .

Mi. Shall I leave thee?
 Behold, I clasp thee by thy garment's hem;
 No, never more I part from thee . . .

Da. Ah, hear me!
 Ill could thy tardy steps keep pace with mine:
 Paths, rough with briars and stones, I shall be forced
 To tread with indefatigable feet
 If I would seek, complying with thy wish,
 A place of refuge. How can thy soft limbs
 Bear up against the unaccustom'd torment?
 And shall I in the wilderness alone
 Ever abandon thee? Thou seest clearly;
 Quickly, by thy means, I should be discover'd
 Quickly would both of us be reconducted
 To the fear'd vengeance of the king . . . Oh Heaven!
 The mere thought makes me shudder . . . Further
 grant,

That we ensured our flight, can I take thee
 From thy sick-sorrowing father? He is placed
 Far from the dainty shelter of his palace,
 Amid the hardships of a camp: his pangs,
 His irritable age, some solace need.
 Ah! wipe the tear-drops from his furrow'd cheeks,
 His melancholy sooth, his fury lull.
 Thou only pleassest him; thou waitest on him;
 And thou alone preservest him alive.

He wishes me destroy'd ; but I wish him
 Rescued from danger, happy, and triumphant . . .
 To-day I tremble for him.—Ere thou wert
 A wife thou wert a daughter : nor canst thou,
 Without delinquency, too much indulge
 Thy love for mē.—Provided I escape,
 What further canst thou wish for me at present ?
 Do not withdraw thyself, I pray thee, do not
 From thy already too, too wretched father.
 As soon as I have found a place of refuge,
 I'll cause the tidings to be sent to thee.
 We shall, I hope, be reunited soon.
 Think what it costs me to abandon thee . . .
 But yet ! . . . ah how ? . . .

Mi. And must I once more lose thee ?
 Once more permit thee to return alone
 To former sufferings, to a wandering life,
 To perils, and to solitary caves ? . . .
 Ah, if I only always were with thee ! . . .
 I might, perchance, alleviate thy ills
 By sharing them.

Da. I do beseech thee, Michal,
 By our affection ; and, if there be need,
 I also do command thee ; inasmuch
 As one that loves, as I do, may command,
 Do not now follow me : thou canst not do it
 Without ensuring my effectual ruin.—
 But if God will my safety, I ought not
 To tarry longer here : the time advances :
 Some spy from his pavilion might detect us,
 And cruelly divulge our purposes.
 I know each bosky covert of this hill,
 And feel most certain that I can elude

All human vigilance.—Give, give me now
 The last embrace. May God be thy support !
 And do thou never, never quit thy father,
 Till Heaven once more unite thee to thy consort . .

Mi. The last embrace? . . And shall I then survive it? . .

I feel, I feel my trembling heart-strings burst . .

Da. And I? . . But I beseech thee check thy tears.—

Now imp my feet with wings, Almighty God.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Michal.

Mi. . . . He flies! . . Oh heavens . . I will pursue him . . . Ah !

With what invisible fetters am I bound? . .

I cannot follow him.—He flies from me! . .

Scarce can I stand . . much less o'er take his steps . .

Once more then have I lost him! . . Who can tell

When I shall see him? And art thou a wife,

Thou wretched lady? . . Were thine nuptial rites? . .

No, no; no more beside my cruel father

Will I remain. I follow thee, oh spouse . .

Yet if I follow him I cause his death?—

Can I, to feign accordance with his steps,

Dissemble my slow pace? . . But from yon camp

What murmur do I hear, like din of arms? . .

I hear it plainly . . and it waxes louder :

And with the trumpet's dissonance is mix'd :

The tramp of horses also . . What is this?

Th' attack before the rising of the sun?

Saul gave no hint of this. Who knows? . . Perchance

My brothers . . Jonathan . . alas . . in danger ! . .
 But tears and howlings and deep groans I hear
 From the pavilion of my father rise ?
 Unhappy father ! . . I will run to meet him . .
 But . . he himself approaches ; how forlorn ! . .
 How desolate ! . . How little like-himself ! . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Saul, Michal.

Sa. Incensed, tremendous shade, ah quit my
 sight ! . .

Leave me, oh leave me ! . . At thy feet I kneel ! . .
 Where do I fly ? . . Where can I hide myself ? . .
 Oh fierce, vindictive spectre be appeased . .
 But to my supplications art thou deaf ;
 And dost thou spurn me ? . . Burst asunder, earth,
 Swallow me up alive . Ah ! that at least
 The fierce and threatening looks of that dire shade
 May not quite pierce me through . .

Mi. From whom ~~flee~~ *flee*st thou ?

No one pursues thee. Dost thou not see me ?
 Father, dost thou not know me ?

Sa. Oh most high,
 Most holy priest, wilt thou that here I pause ?
 Oh Samuel, thou my real father once,
 Dost thou command it ? Prostrate, see, I fall
 At thy supreme command Thou, with thy hand,
 Placed'st the royal crown upon this head ;
 Thou didst adorn it ; strip it, strip it now
 Of all its honours ; tread them under foot.—
 But oh . . the flaming sword of God's revenge
 Which glares eternally before my eyes . .

Thou, who canst do it, snatch it not from me,
Oh no. but from my children. Of my crime,
My children they are innocent . .

Mi. Oh state
Of agony unparallel'd !—Thy sight
Bodies forth things that are not : father, turn
Thyself to me . .

Sa. Oh joy ! . . Is peace inscribed
Upon thy face ? Severe old man, hast thou
In part my prayers accepted ? From thy feet
I will not rise, till thou hast first deliver'd
My unoffending children from thy vengeance.—
What voice exclaim'd, “ And David was thy son ;
“ And thou pursued'st him, yes . . e'en to death.”
Of what dost thou accuse me ? . . Pause, oh pause . .
David, where is he ? . . Find him : let him come ;
And let him slay me at his will and reign . .
Provided only that he spare my children,
Be the throne his . . But art thou pitiless ? . .
Thine eyes are orbs of blood ; thy hand is fire,
And fire thy sword ; thy ample nostrils breathe
Sulphureous flames, that glare and dart at me . .
They've caught me now : they burn my heart to
dust :

Where shall I fly ? . . or whither find deliverance ?

Mi. Cannot my hands restrain thee, nor my voice
Convince thee of the truth ? Hear me : thou art . .

Sa. But no ; on this side a prodigious stream
Of blood restrains my steps . . Atrocious sight !
On both its shores in mountains are up-piled
Great heaps of recent corpses : all is death
On this side : witherward I then will fly . .
But what do I behold ? Who then are ye ?—

“ We are the children of Ahimelech.

“ I am Ahimelech. Die, monarch, die.”—

What cry is that? I recognize him well:

With recent blood he recks; let him drink mine.

And who is this that drags me from behind?

Thou, Samuel, thou?—What did he say? That soon

We all should be with him? I only, I

Shall be with thee; but spare my children . . spare.—

Where am I? . . In an instant from my sight

Have all the spectres vanish’d Where am I?

What have I said? What am I doing? Who

Art thou? What dissonance is this I hear?

It seems to me most like the din of battle:

But the day dawns not yet: ah yes, it is

War’s horrid uproar. Quickly, quickly bring

My shield, my spear, my helmet: now with speed

The weapons, the king’s weapons. I will die,

But in the camp.

Mz. Father, what art thou doing?

Be tranquil . . to thy daughter . .

Sa. I will have

My arms; what daughter? Now thou dost obey me.

My helm, my spear, my shield: these are my children.

Mz. I will not leave thee, no . .

Sa. The trumpets sound

Louder and louder. Thither let me go:

For me my sword alone will be sufficient.—

Thou, quit my side, depart; obey me: there

The death which I am now pursuing dwells.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Saul, Michal, Abner, with a few fugitive Soldiers.

Ab. Oh wretched king!.. Now whither dost thou fly?

This is a dreadful night.

Sa. But whence this battle?

Ab. The foe assail'd us unawares: we are Wholly discomfited..

Sa. Discomfited?

And liv'st thou, traitor?

Ab. I? I live to save thee.

Now, now perchance thy foes rush hitherward:

We are compell'd to shun the first attack:

Meanwhile the day will dawn. Thee will I lead,

With a few followers, to yon upland copses..

Sa. Shall I then live, while all my people fall?

Ab. Ah come!.. advance... the tumult waxes louder.

Sa. My children.. Jonathan.. do they too fly?

Do they abandon me?

Ab. Oh Heaven!.. Thy children..

No, no; they fled not.. Ill-starr'd progeny!..

Sa. I understand thee: they are all destroy'd..

Mi. Alas!.. My brothers?..

Ab. Thou no more hast sons.

Sa. What now remains for me?.. Thou, thou alone,

But not for me, remainest.—In my heart.

Have I been long time finally resolved:

And now the hour is come.—Abner, the last

Is this of my commands. My daughter now
Guide to some place of safety.

Mi. Father, no;
Around thee will I twine myself: the foe
Will never aim a sword against a female.

Sa. Oh daughter!.. say no more: compel me not
To weep. A conquer'd king should never weep.
Save her, oh Abner, go: but if she fall
Within the enemy's power, say not, oh no,
That she's the child of Saul, rather assure them
That she is David's wife; they will respect her.
Go; fly..

Ab. She shall, I swear to thee, be safe,
If I can aught avail; but, thou meantime..

Mi. Oh!.. father.. I will not, I cannot leave
thee..

Sa. I will it; and I yet am king. But see,
The armed bands approach: Abner, fly hence;
Drag her by force with thee if it be needful.

Mi. Oh father!.. and for ever?..

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Saul.

Sa. Oh my children!..
I was a father.—See thyself alone,
Oh king; of thy so many friends and servants
Not one remains.—Inexorable God,
Is thy retributory wrath appeased?
But thou remain'st to me, oh sword: now come
My faithful servant in extremity.—
Hark, hark! the howlings of the insolent victors;
The lightening of their burning torches glares

Before my eyes already ; and I see
Their swords by thousands . . —Impious Philistine,
Thou shalt find me, but like a king, here . . dead.¹

¹ As he falls transfixed on his own sword, the victorious Philistines come up to him in a crowd with blazing torches and bloody swords. While these rush, with loud cries towards Saul, the curtain falls.

AGIS.

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AGIS.	<i>Ephori.</i>
LEONIDAS.	<i>Senators.</i>
AGESISTRATA.	<i>People.</i>
AGIZIADE.	<i>Soldiers of Leonidas.</i>
ANPHARUS.	

SCENE,—The Forum, afterwards the Prison, of
Sparta.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Leonidas, Ampharus.

An. Behold, Leonidas, thou once more sittest
Upon thy royal throne. Entirely, Sparta,
Or of her citizens the better part,
Those who are really and maturely wise,
The lovers of the public weal, have turn'd
Their eyes to thee, expecting, by thy means,
To gain a respite from their long distress.

Le. Yet ~~thence~~ I do not deem, while Agis lives,
That I am king of Sparta. He not only
Lives, but reigns also in the hearts of many.
This temple is to him a place of refuge,

Whose neighbouring portals every day are fill'd
 With a tumultuary audacious throng,
 Who yet desire him for their king, and cry
 For him once more my partner on the throne.

An. And fearest thou to be o'ercome by him?
 I swear, and all the other ephori
 Swear likewise, Agis never shall be king,
 But art is rather needful now than force. .

Le. Lately had he such influence acquired,
 That he had dared, with his contrivances,
 And with his new and ill-imagined laws,
 To overturn all Spartan institutes
 By open force, and from the throne to drive
 Me into exile: ought I, in that throne,
 Reseated by my faithful Spartans, now
 To **avenge** myself on him by hidden schemes?

An. Thou art compell'd to stoop to stratagems:
 He is thy son-in-law. The day that thou
 In cruel banishment, alone, abandon'd,
 Robb'd of thy royal crown, from Sparta wentest,
 He shew'd thee kindness. To the fierce assassin,
 That in pursuit of thee, to spill thy blood,
 Agesilaus sent, with open force
 Agis opposed himself, and led thee safe
 (Thou must remember) to Megæa's confines:
 In this one act alone he did not seem
 The son of Agesistrata, in this
 Openly adverse to her guilty brother.
 Thou only now canst prosecute thy vengeance
 By feign'd concernment for the public good.

Le. An infamous gift he made me of my life
 The day that he expell'd me from the throne;
 And as the injury most exquisite, .

Should I impute it to him. He deem'd me
 A foe no longer to be fear'd ! To-day
 Will I in this entirely undeceive him.
 That he's my son-in-law, doubles in me
 My hatred towards him. Son-in-law to me ?
 Ah ! what was my mistake t' have given to him
 A lady so dissimilar in marriage ?
 No reparation but his death remains.
 Beloved Agiziade, mine only daughter,
 Thou my companion, my solace thou
 Wert to me in my dreary exile. She
 Abandon'd her beloved spouse, since he
 Was hostile to her father ; she esteem'd
 The ties of nature more imperative
 Than those of love : and she would rather drag
 A wretched wandering life with me, than share
 The throne with my unworthy adversary.

An. Yet in proportion as thy rage is just,
 Suppress its workings, if thou would'st indulge it.
 Not less than thee I hate the haughty Agis ;
 And his parade of antiquated virtues,
 Feign'd to reflect on us. It is a folly
 No less ambitious than malevolent,
 To seek to rivet Sparta with those chains
 That erst Lycurgus framed : yet his design
 Has no less scope than this ; hence had his rule
 Reduced our city to extremity :
 And yet distracted, languishing she lies,
 In tumults, and perplexities involved.
 But all things change with time. Those factious
 traitors,
 The ephori, Agesilaus' slaves,
 And more to him devoted than to Agis,

Are all with him now banish'd or destroy'd,
 And Sparta now in us alone is centred.
 But the flagitious, discontented people,
 Always desirous of new men and measures,
 Yet, as a means to their pernicious views,
 Their suffrage give to Agis. Ill can we
 Restrain them by mere force ; it is not safe
 In a new government to use coercion.
 The people may, with less of péril, be
 Deluded than compell'd. Leave thou to me
 This enterprise, in which, not less than thine,
 My heart an interest takes. But here, behold
 Comes Agesistrata. This lady makes
 Fresh progress in th' affections of the Spartans
 From day to day : she also should be fear'd.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Agesistrata, Leonidas, Anpharus.

Agis. Who interrupts my progress ? While I go
 To the asylum of the Spartan monarch,
 Around these confines do I not behold
 Another, and new king of Sparta stalk ?

Le. And had I an asylum in the world
 On that disastrous day, when Sparta's king
 From Sparta I was driven ? For a long time
 I lived in exile from the throne ; and lived,
 Which is far worse, apparently a culprit.
 Grief would have slain me, if my innocence,
 Together with my usurp'd majesty,
 Had not been fully to myself restored
 By wiser councils of that very Sparta.
 Cleombrotus, my execrable rival,

Banish'd from Sparta, he, to whom thy son,
 Master of all things then, my sceptre gave,
 Him-self made my defence. To publish his,
 Why delays Agis? He was on the throne
 My colleague; yet he is my daughter's consort;
 And may, if so it please him, be my foe.—
 But say, what other cause except his guilt
 Detains him now imprison'd in the temple?

Ages. Leonidas, to Sparta and to me
 Thou art but too well known: what are thy faults,
 And what are those of Agis, is express'd
 In a few words. Agis wish'd Sparta free;
 Equal her citizens, courageous, strong,
 And terrible: true Spartans: and he wish'd,
 Not to be paramount to any man,
 Except in magnanimity and virtue.
 Rich, mercenary, sunk in indolence,
 Effeminate, by party spirit torn,
 Such as she is in short, Leonidas
 Desired her still to be. To guilt ascribed
 Are Agis' purposes, because the bad
 In Sparta o'er the good preponderate;
 Those of Leonidas ascribed to virtue,
 Because they are adapted to the times.
 To-day, at least, remember if thou canst,
 That my son shew'd himself the open foe
 Of thy power only, never of thy person;
 Reflect that now thou would'st not live, if he,
 More citizen than king, had not preserved,
 And perhaps to his own detriment, thy life.

Le. 'Tis true, that Agis, perhaps in spite of thee,
 On that same day on which thy cruel brother
 Sent vile assassins to destroy my life,

By other satellites, to him attach'd,
 Preserved me living, and exempt from wounds :
 But can a banish'd king, of throne bereft,
 Bereft of honour and of innocence,
 By a fierce rival, his ill-granted life
Ascribe to generous impulses of pity ?

Ages. The gift was no less noble than imprudent :
 Agis himself so deem'd it ; but innate
 Is magnanimity in that great heart.
 Th' illustrious Agis would not, with thy blood,
 Contaminate the enterprise, at once
 Unparallel'd **and** generous, of a king,
 Resolved spontaneously to reinstate
 His people in illimitable freedom.
 I ne'er dissuaded him from pardoning thee ;
 And perhaps should have attempted it in vain :
 Mother of Agis, could I e'er betray
 A heart less high than that of such a son ?
 'Tis true, I call Agesilaus brother ;
 But now of such a name he is unworthy.
 With florid eloquence, and specious virtues,
 Covering his irreclaimable corruption,
 Agis and Sparta, and with these myself,
 He hath deceived . . .

Lc. Never Leonidas.

Ages. He was thy counterpart, and thence well
 known.

To take for ever from the creditors
 And debtors, from the rich and mendicants,
 Their Anti-Spartan names, Agesilaus,
 More than all other men, persuaded Agis.
 Seeing himself by our example forced
 To sacrifice his riches, and subdued

By brutal avarice, disgracing thus
 Th' ephori's sacred function, he forbade
 The high participation. Hence the people,
 Confused, and more oppress'd, in doubt and fear
 Betwixt their not extinguish'd servitude,
 And their confounded, scarce reviving freedom,
 Recall'd thee to the throne : and chose in thee
 A worthy instrument to prop once more
 Their soft, incurably corrupted customs.
 That very people, to thy hands gave bound
 Cleombrotus, erewhile elected king :
 That very people, to the custody
 Of an asylum only relegates
 Agis, their monarch once so idolized.

An. Far more is he protected by the laws,
 Than by this his asylum. Though he be
 Th' annuller and subverter of those laws,
 Yet does he owe to them and us his safety.
 To us, true ephori, before all Sparta,
 Will he be challenged to defend himself :
 Provided he can prove his innocence,
 He need not fear the monarch or his people.

Le. If in his heart he is not self-accused,
 Whence this asylum ? Why not summon me
 To an impartial judgment at the just
 And popular tribunal ?

Ages. Because thou
 Dost render it (of virtue destitute)
 Thy instrument with bribery and arms.
 Because thou dost return full of revenge,
 Which that tribunal too well knows : in short,
 Because thy new, not Spartan ephori,
 Other than legal terrors fulminate.

My Agis knows not fear ; but he would snatch
Himself from infamy ; which evermore
He who usurps authority, on others
Can, for a transient space at least, bestow.

Le. What will thy Agis do then ? He cannot
Now longer keep himself conceal'd, if he
Fear real infamy.

An. Much less can Sparta,
In her existing strange vicissitudes,
Endure the loss of one of her two kings.
Agis still bears the name, yet he performs not
The necessary functions of a king :
Meanwhile within its ramparts, and without
Sparta is insecure ; its institutes
Are all despised ; and there is need . . .

Ages. Of Agis ;
And with him need of every thing that's good.
The enemies of Sparta know this truth
As well as we, in whose breasts Agis only
Revived a terror of our arms. Yes, Agis,
The beardless Agis, made the *Ætolians* tremble,
On whom the great Aratus, hoary leader,
Made no impression with his fierce Achaians.
I do conjure thee now, Leonidas,
To undertake no scheme for his destruction.
For notwithstanding fate, often unjust,
Should crown thy efforts now in the attempt,
From thence would'st thou in course of time entail
Heavy disgrace and blame upon thyself,
And on thy country lasting detriment.
A know not whether country be to thee
A sacred name ; but, among us it is
A name so strong and paramount to all,

That if a fleeting doubt rose in my heart
 Whether the thoughts, much more the deeds of Agis,
 Were all directed to the good of Sparta,
 I, though his mother, I would first implore
 Against my son, in all its plenitude,
 The inexorable rigour of the laws.
 Act thou then now according to thy judgment,
 Nor Agis, nor who brought him into life,
 Save for their country and their countrymen
 Can ever tremble : thou, although in arms,
 And in a prosperous state, within thy heart
 Self-conscious, tremble for thyself alone.

Le. Lady, thou art a mother, and of one
 Thou art a mother who possess'd the sceptre,
 Hence I excuse thee. Fear in you dwells not ;
 So say'st thou. May its absence be auspicious ;
 But the ephori and Sparta, and myself
 Give to you only one whole day to prove
 This innocence of yours, for ever vaunted,
 And never proved. Let him at last come forth,
 And exculpate himself ; and even me,
 If so he will, let him accuse : his choice,
 Except in reference to this asylum,
 Is free in all things else. But say to him,
 If he persist to sequester himself,
 That Sparta by to-morrow's dawn no more
 Deems him her king, and I no more a colleague.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Agesistrata, Ampharus.

An. He speaks embitter'd by his recent exile :
 But Sparta doth not share in his resentments.

Thou shouldst, thou, to whom alike are dear
Agis and Sparta, strive to adapt thy son
To times like these, and inculcate compliance . . .

Ages. To compromise his honour, not myself,
Nor you, nor Sparta, ever could induce him.
That the king's rage is not the rage of Sparta,
The throng immense of Spartans in fresh troops,
Round his asylum every day assembled,
Sufficiently convince me, who call him,
With loud, audacious, and intrepid cries,
Preserver, sovereign-citizen, and father ;
Second deliverer, a new Lycurgus.
His virtue must indeed be eminent,
Since Sparta thus dare praise him at her peril ;
Since admiration of that excellence
Greater effects in Sparta can produce
Than all the terror of your arm'd adherents.

An. The people gather into crowds, and shout,
Yet nothing they attempt : nor will their vile
And turbulent deportment aught effect,
Except increasingly to exasperate
The good against thy son. Thou canst do much,
Mother of Agis, on the Spartan people ;
On Agis canst do more : the first induce,
(I pray thee hear) to cease from turbulence ;
The second, for a little time at least,
To adapt himself to time and circumstance.
If thy son's good, and if the good of all
Thou dost desire, 'tis ill, thou know'st, ensured
By civil violence and rabid strife.—
If thou refusest, in a cause like this,
Warmly to exert thyself, not wrongfully,
Leonidas, and Sparta, and myself,

Will execrate you as domestic foes ;
 Then, then 'will irrefragably appear
 That all your ample wealth, a tribute large,
 Was with malignant purposes relinquish'd
 To purchase in reversion for yourselves
 Supremacy, and not equality .
 The same of lofty efforts, good or bad,
 On the event depends. Let not your deeds,
 Magnanimous and generous (if they are,)
 Receive a taint from other men's suspicions,
 Which tax you now with probable repentance
 For such a mighty gift ; and further tax you
 With a design large harvest thence to reap.
 I, as a magistrate and citizen,
 Not as a foe, say every thing before thee :
 On you alone it afterwards depends
 To take what measures seem the most expedient.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Agesistrata.

Ages. Fain would these men gain time ; but time
 shall not

Be granted to them. Ah, the suavity
 Of Anpharus, so subtly feign'd ; the rage
 Of fierce Leonidas, with pain repress'd,
 Too manifestly indicate to me
 The destiny of Agis and of Sparta.
 Let nothing now be left untried to save them ;
 And if our country's angry gods with blood
 Alone can be appeased, myself and Agis
 Will for that country die ; we're born to serve her.
 May Sparta from our ashes rise once more.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Agis.

Agis. Ye pitying gods, who have till now been
pleased

To rescue from Leonidas's rage
My well-known innocence, no more can I
Remain within your temple. I from you
Sought an asylum, that my infirm country
Might not be forced t' endure more violence,
More slaughter, and more broils : now there are those
Who dare ascribe this step to my misdeeds,
And to the terror of just punishment.
Behold, at once the asylum I relinquish.—
Oh Sparta, Sparta ! . . . To thy true deliverers
Must thou be ever fatal ? Ah, to me
Were but the fate allow'd that once befell
Thy first illustrious father ! Not content
With everlasting exile, on himself
Inflicted by Lyncurgus, I would chuse
Further, ignoble death, if by that death
I might at least behold with thee revive
The pristine vigour of thy sacred laws ! . .
But who so quickly comes to this asylum ? . .
Whom do I see ? Oh heavens ! Agiziade ! . .
The daughter of Leonidas ! . . Alas ! . .
That consort, who, although so well beloved,
Yet for her father's sake abandon'd me !

SCENE THE SECOND.

Agis, Agiziade.

Agis. What do I see? My Agis, hast thou ventured
To leave the asylum? Speedily I came
To find thee there . . .

Agis. Whate'er thou wert towards me,
My still beloved consort, why dost thou
Thus bend thy steps towards a wretched husband?

Agis. Scarce can I speak, oh Agis. . . I return
To thee, with thy embitter'd, alter'd fate.
Thy mournful state, and that alone, had power
To tear me from my father. On the day
That I was forced, oh consort, to abandon
My children, and thyself, that I might not
Suffer my father, in his wretched exile,
To go from us a lonely fugitive,
I felt my heart as if asunder torn :
Nor would'st thou ever have beheld me more,
I now confess to thee, in Sparta's soil,
If to the cruel shafts of adverse fortune
He had remain'd obnoxious. Once more he
Is raised on high ; thou, in thy turn, depress'd.
Who, who could now dissever me from thee ?
With all my heart do I to thee return :
And I conjure thee, by my unfeign'd love ;
(For thine, I know not if I yet possess it ;)
By those loved children once to thee so dear ;
And further I conjure thee by thy country,
To which thou art so loftily devoted,
To grant at least a respite for the present

To thy new institutes. May love of peace,
The first of benefits, to this induce thee :
Be pleased to reassume, as heretofore,
In strict conjunction with Leonidas,
Supreme controulment of the Spartan state.

Agis. Lady, who could that fondness ever blame
Thou bear'st thy father? Thou canst never know
him ;

This is not thy prerogative : most good,
Most fond, most pious, most accomplish'd, thou,
In these corrupted times, a rare example
Of pristine conjugal and filial love ;
Feel'st no solicitude except to be
The generous partner of his destiny
Whom adverse fortunes persecutes the most.
If thou wert ever dear to me, to see thee
To-day return to me when all men fly,
Makes thee to me more dear. From thy great hear
Less I expected not : I only fear'd
That with his happiness intoxicate,
Leonidas perchance might interdict
Thy quitting him for me.

Agis. Just were thy fears.
Since Sparta as a conqueror received him
Three days have past ; three days have also past
That I have combated with him for thee.
Nor, since I could not his consent obtain,
Was I less firm, whate'er the risk might be,
To join thee here. Himself, at length compliant,
A little while ago to thee would send me
A messenger of peace : he, by my lips,
Now proffers it to thee without reserve ;
He begs thee and conjures thee that thou wilt,

(Abandoning thy retreat,) in concert with him,
 Adopt all means whence Sparta may obtain
 Henceforth entire indissoluble peace.

Agis. Doth he send thee to me? This change, so sudden,
 Permits the indulgence of no joyful hope.
 What do I say? If in himself he hope not,
 Can Agis hope? What more remains for me
 To fear, when my poor country every day
 Is more enslaved?—more, every day, remote
 From her primæval eminence, her great,
 Illustrious, and immortalizing virtues?
 I had already of my own accord
 Abandon'd my retreat: far other motives
 Had now induced me to anticipate
 The crafty wishes of Leonidas . .
 Ah! this will be a memorable day
 To Sparta and to me; fatal perchance
 To thee, if thou dost love me . . I cannot,
 Oh my beloved consort, doubt of this . .
 But, if thou hearkenest to my upright words,
 Do not thou, worthy of a better father,
 I do beseech thee, irritate in vain
 His captious soul. Live for thy children's sake;
 Against the rage of fierce Leonidas
 Be thou to them a shield: those lofty thoughts
 Which I have ever shared with thee, and which
 Thou feltest so profoundly, fortified
 By other lofty ones in thee innate,
 Which are the source sublime of filial love,
 Do thou in them transfuse, that they may live
 The glory of their father and their country.
 Athirst for vengeance do I not expire,

But Spartan virtues panting to restere :
Provided that they one day may arise,
Although in distant times, from sons of mine,
With this my spirit will be satisfied . . '

Agis. My heart thou rendest . . Why thus speak of death ?

Agis. Thou art a Spartan, and the wife of Agis ;
Refrain from tears. My blood may serve my country ;

My tears cannot serve thee. Ah, dry thine eyes ;
Compel me not to weep . .

Agis. I know full well
The bitter agonies of thy sublime,
Devoted heart ; thy upright, generous schemes
Within my breast profoundly are engraved ;
And if in their complete accomplishment
The entire and lofty ruin of my father
Were not involved, e'en at the risk of life,
Would'st thou find me first ready to promote them . .
How oft have I lamented o'er that father,
So different to thee ! How oft have I
Wept that I was his daughter ! Yet, alas !
I was indeed, and am . . and 'twixt you two
I live distracted, and I ought to be
The means of amity betwixt you both,
Or ought to die.

Agis. If thou in other times,
From other blood hadst been in Sparta born,
Daughter of Sparta, mother of true Spartans
Thou would'st have been. Yet thy not Spartan father
I would not as a crime to thee impute.
Prompted by thy most generous, lofty heart,
But not well disciplined, I heard thy lips

Pronounce thy father's and thy consort's names,
 But not thy country's. Yet why should I wonder,
 If thou art more a daughter and a wife
 Than citizen? What'e'r thou art, I love thee ;
 Nor any force, save that of my example,
 To thy not Spartan feelings would I use.
 Hence I conjure thee by our love, yea, more,
 If it be needful I command, that thou
 Should'st manifest to-day that thou art yet
 E'en more a mother than a wife or daughter.—
 But whence this horrible tumult that approaches?
 What crowd is this? what cries? oh heaven! my
 mother!
 And a great multitude of people arm'd
 Pursues her steps!

SCENE THE THIRD.

Agis, Agesistrata, Agiziade, People.

Ages. My son, and what, hast thou
 Left thy retreat? In whom dost thou confide?
 In the base daughter of Leonidas?
 Behold, I bring thee a more certain succour;
 These will at any moment be prepared . . .

Agis. Oh mother, thou should'st better know thy
 son :
 I in myself, or else in no one, trust.
 She whom thou call'st Leonidas's daughter,
 Is both my wife and friend, and one with me.—
 Spartans, if ye indeed are such, whom now
 I, at the risk of my renown, behold
 Tumultuously menacing in arms ; •
 Spartans, now Agis speaks to you : no arms

I, in my favour, ever will endure
 Against my country. I seek no protection ;
 Nor fear I any man. I well suffice
 To authenticate my perfect innocence :
 To make that innocence completely triumph
 O'er other's malice, not with arms indeed,
 But with more firm resolves, ye might yourselves
 A just support *one day* have given to me : ...
 But *now*, too late and vain, and (which is worse)
 Illicit, would your interference be.

Ages. And would'st thou then expose thyself un-
 arm'd

To the malign rage of Leonidas ?
 To the bribed ephori's perfidious snares ?
 Ah ! I endure it not, nor these true sons
 Of Sparta will endure it, who are all
 Now ready for their king to yield their lives.

People. Yes, we are all ready to die for Agis.

Agis. Agis and Sparta heretofore were one ;
 Now are they thoroughly by fate disjoin'd ;
 Now that, perchance, 'tis indispensable
 That Agis perish to make Sparta safe.
 Blood should be never spill'd ; much less when blood
 Cannot regenerate virtue. Ye cannot
 Now die for me, without the sacrifice
 Of many others : and your own lives here,
 And those of others equally, are all
 Not yours, but the possession of your country.
 There are, I know, in multitudes there are,
 Misguided citizens : but to restore them
 To the straight path of duty I prepare
 A reconciliatory sacrifice.
 With this can I compel them to amendment ;

With this make you with fervour more intense
The worshippers of self-renouncing virtue.

Agi. Oh wretched me! Thou mak'st me tremble.
Speak.

What dost thou now intend?

Ages. Lady, for whom
Are these thy fears, thy husband or thy father?

Agis. Mother, thou know'st not how it wounds
my heart —

To hear thee thus irreverently taunt
My faithful wife. She has this instant made
Herself, with her true filial piety,
More dear to me than ever yet she was.—
Mother, and wife, and citizens, attend.—
I have resolved within my inmost heart
To make malignancy itself confess,
The most invidious, and the most depraved,
That I'm a real lover of my country.

A king, a father, and a citizen,
And nothing else have I to Sparta been;
At least if I am not deceived: in others
Perhaps I myself, with violence, inspired
At first some misconception of myself.
This choice of an asylum thence was not
To wisdom in me, but a guilty conscience,
And terrors of just punishment, ascribed.
Thence Agis of a vulgar king endured
The insufferable stigma. But to-day,
Such as it is, my heart shall be reveal'd.
Oh welcome, yes, thrice welcome, is the danger
Which I am forced to encounter, to make clear
The good which I attempted to effect,
And of those men whose interest is in evil

The circumventive and invidious malice !
 I well knew how to prove myself a king,
 And dared to do it, for the public good ;
 And for my private good I also dare
 Become once more a private citizen.
 Not that I hope at present to convince
 The countless disaffected ; they in heart
 Already are too much so ; but I ought
 Now in the presence of collected Sparta,
 To cover them with shame and infamy.
 They would, and still I hope they will, accuse me :
 I rather with my actions, than with words,
 Shall undertake to exculpate myself.
 First would I unreservedly to Sparta
 Promulgate my intentions, then submit . . .

People. Agis submit ! No, never ! All of us
 Will make those traitors listen to thy words . . .

Agis. Not you, oh no ! Truth, from my lips alone,
 Shall make me by unwilling ears be heard.
 And if my honour in your sight is dear ,
 If I have any thing from you deserved ;
 If there is aught in me ; or if, at least,
 Ye, from the recollection of my deeds,
 For something hope, I supplicate, exhort,
 Nay, I command you, to lay down your arms,
 And to the ephori, whate'er they be,
 To render, with myself, submission due.
 The king of Persia, when he finds that foes
 Are risen against himself within his realm,
 Accosts them with compensatory weapons ;
 But Sparta's monarch doth esteem himself
 E'en to his enemies accountable :
 At first he strives to baffle calumny

With arguments ; but if in vain, he meets it
 With the immoveable calmness of a king.—
 I grieve that, and eternally shall grieve,
 The same Leonidas, who thus assails me,
 Unheard and exiled, from your city went.
 Perchance his cause he could not have defended ;
 Perchance he would not have attempted it ;
 But for this purpose I should have allow'd him
 Ample convenience. My guilty colleague,
 Agesilaus, was resolved on force ;
 My opposition ineffectual proved.
 Few are aware of this : hence he and I
 In the same imputation are involved.
 I from thenceforth discover'd, though too late,
 That he was only a dissembling Spartan :
 But time press'd on me, and the lofty wish
 To effect the good, to which the banishment
 Of fierce Leonidas (its chiefest hindrance)
 Seem'd to prepare the way. His exile, hence,
 Just, but inflicted in an unjust manner,
 I tolerated for the good of Sparta.

People. And who knows not that thou didst save
 his life ?

Ag. Yes, by his means alone my father yet
 Enjoys the breath of life. Myself beheld
 The cruel danger which surrounded him ;
 The assassins of Agesilaus now
 Had almost in their snares entangled him,
 When opportunely Agis' partizans
 Dispersed them, and deliver'd us unhurt.

Ages. Leonidas to-day would hence repay him,
 By wresting from him not his life alone,
 But his fame also.

Agis. To effect this purpose
The tyrant has no power : on me alone,
And on my deeds, my fame depends.

Ages. The firm
And persevering project to oppress thee,
The jealousy of others, from thy deeds
Solely arise. But *Anpharus* comes hither,
The friend and colleague worthy of the tyrant.

Agis. Let him be heard.

Agis. Oh heavens ! for thee I tremble . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Agis, Agesistrata, Agiziade, Anpharus, People.

An. Far from thy refuge, *Agis*, in the midst
Of such a throng, I did not think to find thee.
But yet more grateful witnesses than these
I could not wish to meet. I hither come
The will of Sparta to unfold to thee.

Agis. It is . . .

An. Pacific.

Agis. How ?

An. It breathes true peace,
If peace be not too adverse to thy views ;
Or if at once security and greatness
Thou dost not seek in turbulence and discord.

Agis. I ought not now to clear myself to thee :
Perhaps before them to whom I owe the homage,
Of this I shall acquit myself. Meanwhile,
What is this peace *Leonidas* proposes ?

An. Am I the monarch's messenger ? I am
One of the ephori ; in Sparta's name
Do I address thee. If thou now consent

To yield submission to the citizens,
 (The true and wise ones,) and restore once more
 Peace to the city, each new law of thine
 Thyself condemning, Sparta, by my lips,
 To-day restores to thee thy royal seat,
 Which thou hast abdicated by thy flight.

Ares. Agis . . .

Agis. I am thy son, oh mother; now
 On me rely.—~~Thou~~ that in Sparta's name,
 So that I make myself unworthy of it,
 Offerest to me the throne, I pray thee take
 This answer to Leonidas, that I
 Would speak with him, ere to collected Sparta
 I solemnly and finally appeal.

Agis. I do beseech thee to my father go,
 Oh Anphartus, and urge him to compliance.
 Make him remember that he would not now
 Be blest with life, had it not been for Agis;
 That he to Agis as a consort gave
 His much-loved only daughter . . .

Agis. Nothing else
 Make him remember, than that we are both
 The citizens of Sparta; and that now
 The interest of all obliges him
 To grant me audience.

An. It is most uncertain
 Whether he can or will confer with thee,
 Till he has learn'd if his proposed conditions
 Are by thyself rejected or embraced.

Agis. He can, on no account, nor will he do it,
 Refuse to hear me. I, from henceforth, quit
 For ever my asylum: round my person
 No train do I permit.—Spartans, to you

Do I authoritatively exclaim,
 Here, undefended, innocent, alone,
 Will I remain.—Anpharus,¹ witness thou;
 The time, the place, the circumstance, all now
 Will be most opportune. Ere it be long,
 I to this forum will return; and here
 May the king not disdain to come to me.
 I shall be here alone; but let him have
 His satellites beside him; we shall be
 By all the citizens of Sparta seen,
 But shall not be by any of them heard.

An. Since thou wilt have it so, I quickly fly
 To bear the tidings to Leonidas.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Agis, Agesistrata, Agiziade.

Agis. Well did I know with what a bait t' entice
 him.—

Now, ladies, to my dwelling and my children
 Let me return with you. I shall enjoy
 A few brief, final moments, in your presence,
 Of private consolation, till I join
 This fatal conference.

Agiz. Oh heaven! . . .

Ages. Oh son!

What canst thou hope from this perfidious king?

Agis. He grasps the fate of Sparta; and canst thou,
 Oh mother, ask what Agis hopes from him?

The people here retire, and disperse.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Agis.

Agis. Leonidas yet comes no . . .
 Disdains the challenge? He dare not: here shame,
 If nothing else, should bring him now. Erewhile
 The people heard the generous invitation,
 That I, by Anpharus, dispatch'd to him:
 Many considerations yet restrain him,
 Many and powerful; many apprehensions,
 Though he be victor, lurk within his heart.
 Ah, could I, could I, by his fears promote
 The interest of Sparta! . . . But at length
 He comes; oh! does he thus appropriate
 A royal retinue? It fits him well.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Agis, Leonidas, Soldiers.

Agis. Oh king, or ere another task begins,
 Thou com'st to hear me? . . .

Le. Yes, I come to hear thee . . .

Agis. Then, I demand to speak to thee alone . . .

Le. Withdraw.¹—I am alone: I listen to thee.

Agis. I speak not to thee as thy daughter's husband:

Though, beyond all expression, I adore
 A wife who is the paragon of daughters.

¹ The soldiers retire.

Le. She was, 'tis true, a powerful tie betwixt us,
Ere thou from Sparta drov'st me into exile.

Agis. I know it: nor should I now mention it,
Since I refrain'd from speaking of it then.
Not that I then forgot it, this thou knowest;
But thoughts of Sparta then my speech inspired,
Whose bidding silenced, and still silences,
In me all other impulses.—Thou, king
Of Sparta, art my foe: but if thou art
Not so of Sparta, I to-day demand,
And from the gods, protectors of my country,
Hope to obtain, an eloquence so strong,
So true, and lofty, that thou may'st by me
The prompt and certain method now be taught,
Whence to obtain perchance beyond thy wishes . . .

Le. Beyond my wishes? Know'st thou what I wish?

Agis. Vengeance on me, before all other things
Thou wishest, and shalt have it; I to thee
Will give it thoroughly. Thy second wish
Is lasting power, and I will point to thee
Its certain source. Nor satisfied with this;
A method, lofty and infallible,
I offer to thee, whence thou may'st acquire
Another blessing, to which perhaps thy thoughts
Have ne'er aspired: and it is such, that thou
(Provided it be easy to obtain)
Canst not despise it. Permanent, immense,
This will I gain thee yet . . .

Le. And it is? . . .

Agis. Fame.—

Le. Thou art rather fitted to prevent, than give it.—
With me the throne thou filledst; never then
Didst thou concur with me for Sparta's good,

Or for our common glory : thou alone
 Thought'st of thy private interest, and to make
 Thyself a name upon the wreck of mine :
 Hence Sparta to extremity, and me
 To exile, thou didst goad. I do not mean
 To take revenge for this ; I ought, indeed,
 To exact it now for lacerated Sparta ;
 But a true love of peace checks me in this :
 Peace, which thy colleagues in iniquity,
 Although in vain, are ready to disturb.
 The love of peace, in short, induces me
 To offer to thee now, in Sparta's name,
 Pardon entire . . .

Agis. Entire ? It is too much.—

Come, no one hears us here ; what boots deceit ?
 Thou thinkest that I do not read thy heart ;
 Thou canst not make me think that heart is changed.
 I think, however, that to take from me
 The power and sceptre, would not now suffice
 To make thee fully on the throne secure.
 Thou knowest well that while I live thou canst not
 Install another colleague thy liege vassal :
 But neither dar'st thou at the same time slay me,
 Because thou'rt well aware that in the hearts
 Of many still I reign. Behold thy true, .
 And most-conceal'd reflections : now hear mine.—
 Within th' asylum I inclosed myself
 Against my will ; spontaneously I quit it ;
 And force to force, if I were so inclined,
 I might oppose : art to oppose to art,
 I neither have the skill, nor will to do it.
 That to defend my cause, I will not spill
 A drop of Spartan blood, thou shouldest now

Be well convinced. Thou seest me now alone :
 I in thy power am placed : behold me now
 A suppliant for my country. I am ready
 To yield to thee for her not life alone,
 But also fame.

Le. Hast thou this fame of thine
 Unspotted, which thou dar'st to offer me ?

Agis. Unspotted, yes, throughout ; and worthy
 Agis ;

And too illustrious for thy envious eyes.
 Me thou abhorrest ; Sparta I adore :
 Now hear how thou at once may'st gratify
 Thy hatred and my love. I undertook,
 By equalizing all the citizens,
 In Sparta to revive true liberty,
 Greatness, and virtue. With the most depraved
 Thou never ceasedst to oppose thyself,
 Although in vain ; and not that thou in this
 Didst never see the common benefit,
 Immense and unalloy'd ; not that pure truth,
 With her divine resplendence, did not find,
 Alas ! without inflaming it, a passage
 To thy resisting heart : but in that heart,
 The love of gold, and arbitrary power,
 Wither'd at once all patriotic thoughts,
 Baffled the cry of truth, the vital warmth,
 And permeating influence of virtue.
 The universal, genuine voice of Sparta
 Removed thee from thy throne, proclaiming thee
 Thy country's foe : nor didst thou even try
 To impugn the insupportable reproach.
 In exile afterwards, proscribed, and wandering,
 Thou knowest well thou hadst been vilely slain ;

I hinder'd it : nor do I now say this
To thee upbraidingly, but to afford
No dubious evidence, that not thy ruin,
But lofty Spartan actions were indeed
Alone the object of my lofty schemes.

Lc. And of a fatal inadvertency
Must thou reproach thyself in saving me.

Agis. And thou wilt make for this, by slaying me,
Ample atonement. Only do thou learn
Of me the means ~~rec.~~ this.—To liberty,
More than to tyranny, is Sparta inclined :
Of this be thou assured, though for the present
Thou hast imposed on her the kingly yoke.
A transient indignation of the many
Against the infamous Agèsilaus,
Hath now replaced thee on the throne, and driven
Him from the ephori : there are who now
Deem me a partner in his crimes, and not
Entirely without cause, while I am silent.
Do not thou goad me on to clear myself
Of such reproach effectually ; 'twould be
Most easy to demonstrate, that the king
Betray'd at once both Sparta and myself :
If I make this to all men clear, then thou
Canst not, without much injury to thyself,
Use violence towards me.

Lc. Thou thinkest so ?

Agis. Thou knowest it. But do not fear. I wish'd
To be the Spartan monarch of true Spartans ;
Thee I leave king of these. No force of thine
Avails to make me guilty : I will, I,
Make myself culpable before all Sparta ;
Will yield thee the entire ascendancy

Over myself; will make thee really great
 Against thy will, provided thou aspire
 To greatness.

Le. Thou in vain insultest me . . .

Agis. Do thou thyself, yes now, accomplish that
 For Sparta, and her glory's sake, which I
 Audaciously attempted. From the throne
 Do thou once more promulgate not my laws,
 But the free, sacred, lofty, manly ones
 Of great Lycurgus: banish poverty
 At once with wealth; she is the child of wealth:
 Resign thy riches; equalize the people;
 Become thyself a Spartan, and at once
 Spartans create: . . . this purposed I to do;
 Do thou accomplish it, and snatch from me
 Th' eternal glory of the enterprise.—
 If thou wilt swear to me to accomplish this,
 Thou before Sparta as a criminal
 May'st drag me now; and say I made a plea
 Of public good to screen my private views;
 And say, that though my purposes were guilty,
 My laws were not so. Thou shalt add to this,
 That thou thyself, with a more upright mind,
 And greater singleness of heart, once more
 The glory of thy city wilt renew.
 Then in the presence of collected Sparta
 Shall I confess myself deserving death;
 Shall I confess that the enormities,
 The wrongs Agesilaus dared commit,
 From me derived their origin; that I
 In him a harbinger of tyranny
 Dared to create; that I, by his means, sought
 To make a trial of degenerate Sparta.

This doubtless will suffice. Death, which thou canst
not,

Except by treachery, now inflict on me,
(Thou seest,) from my fellow citizens
Thou wilt obtain it thus, and it will seem
To them most just. I thus divest myself
Of that same fame which thou canst not take from
me,

Which gives thee umbrage, and to thee resign it.
I die, thou reignest; both will be contented.
The throne will not invalidate thy fame;
Though to the tomb I carry infamy,
Still unimpair'd to that tomb shall I bear
My only hope, that Sparta by that means
Shall rise again to renovated life.

Le. Dost deem me so corrupt?

Agis. I deem thee great;
Since I account thee fit to consummate
My mighty projects...

Le. Shall I lend a hand
To thy pernicious, impious designs?...

Agis. Thou wilt be utterly from envy freed
When I am dead; and thou may'st then fulfil,
To thy advantage, and to that of Sparta,
My mighty purposes. Oh, do thou dare
T' appear thyself exalted in my greatness:
Envious wert thou; now do thou wholly hide
Thy own original baseness with my blood.
Lift up thy soul to an unhop'd-for greatness,
And make thyself the equal of thy throne.

Le. The acclamation of the citizens
Already has abundantly raised me
Above thyself; but, pardoning thee, if this

Sparta concede to me, will give me yet
Fuller ascendancy o'er thee. Meanwhile
Let me present thee now, for needs I must,
To Sparta.—Hast thou aught else to impart ?

Agis. This only, that thou know'st not how to be
Vicious, nor know'st how to dissemble virtue.

Le. Now that thou hast imparted all thy thoughts,
Or ere th' asylum once more rescue thee
From Sparta's reach, I think myself constrain'd
To drag thee to a prison.—*Coronatus*, advance.

Agis. I in a prison more securely feel
Than thou upon a throne. By Sparta, we
Shall both be heard ; nor face to face canst thou
Before me stand.—Thou ruinnest thyself
If thou in prison kill me ; this thou knowest.
Oh think, and think again ; to save thyself,
And murder me, no means to thee remain,
Save those which heretofore I pointed out.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Leonidas.

Le. At last I've caught him. Many obstacles,
'Tis true, and mighty dangers, I confront :
Yet will I, yes, though even at the risk
Of my own detriment, yet will I slay
This haughty importuning demagogue.
But by his death I shall accomplish nothing,
If first I do not rob him of his fame :
This can alone perpetuate my sway.—
Alas ! I feel it e'en to agony !—
Nor can I give it utterance ; when he speaks,
A permeating ray of genuine truth

Illumes my bosom, and almost subdues me . . .
 Ah no ! it tears and maddens my vex'd heart,
 That insupportable and stern parade
 Of hated virtue ! Let him die ; yes, perish . . .
 E'en if t' extinguish him my life I forfeit.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Agiziade, Leonidas, Agesistrata.

Agi. Father, and is it true ? .. by treacherous wiles
 Hast thou to soldiers hands my spouse . . .

Ages. Is this
 Thy promised faith, Leonidas ?

Lc. What faith ?
 What have I promised ? I have pledged my faith
 To Sparta, but to Agis never.

Agi. Ah !
 Beloved father, to thy daughter grant . . .
 Alas ! ..

Ages. Spontaneously did he not quit
 The place of refuge ? Did he not come forth,
 Alone, unarm'd, and of his own accord,
 To treat with thee of peace ? And thou, meanwhile,
 Dost instigate thy parasites to drag him
 Within a prison ? violating thus
 The honour of a king, and, more than this,
 The express will of Sparta ? .. Infamous . . .

Le. Oh ladies, to divert me from my will,
 Tears and reproaches equally are vain.
 I am the first of Sparta's magistrates,
 And not her tyrant. The ephori and Sparta
 Should now pass judgment on the guilty Agis ;
 The ephori and Sparta should restore him,

If innocent, to his suspended rank,
 Ne'er would it have been possible to 'prove him
 Guilty or innocent, if he persisted
 To seek th' interposition of the people,
 Or an asylum in the temple's walls.
 'Tis time, high time, that Sparta should be freed
 From the distraction of suspense, produced
 By knowing not, if she does, as she ought,
 Possess two monarchs, or if one is wanting.

Agis. Ah father! . . . Agis ~~rescues~~ thee from death,
 And thou that Agis draggest to a prison?
 On him hast thou bestow'd thy daughter's hand,
 And yet would'st rob him of his fame? Though
 guilty,

(Which he is not,) thou shouldest be the first
 To interpose in his behalf. I gave
 To thee no dubious trial of my love
 In thy adversity: and now from Agis
 Nothing, in his adversity, can wrest me:
 To doom thy daughter with thy son-in-law
 To chains, or to release him from those chains,
 Art thou constrain'd: nor menaces, nor prayers,
 Shall e'er persuade me to abandon him.
 Nor canst thou wreak a vengeance on his head,
 Which shall not equally rebound on me:
 Thou, thou must shed that very daughter's blood,
 Who, to accompany thee in banishment,
 Her husband, and her children, and her throne,
 And her beloved country, sacrificed.

Ages. Oh thou indeed not his, but my true daughter!

Thou Spartan wife and daughter, thou in vain
 Appealest to a father not a Spartan.—

Base envy, and still baser thirst of vengeance,
Close both his heart and lips.—What could'st thou
say? . . .

Thou, oh Leonidas, within thy heart
Hast sworn th' entire destruction of my son,
I know thou hast; and equally I know
All, all thy impious stratagems. But yet
If thou ^{on} both of us should'st death inflict,
(For my existence ^{at} ¹ my son's are one,)
In vain thou hopest to destroy our fame.
Thine own by this means . . . but what do I say?
Art thou possess'd of fame?—No other object
Did thy heart e'er propose, than to preserve
And to augment thy riches by the throne.
Thou in Seleucus' court becam'st at once
Accomplish'd in the art of avarice,
And that of wasting blood. A Persian thou,
Reignest in Sparta: hence thou dost abhor
The equality of citizens, from whence
New virtues soon would rise; whence thou once
more

Would'st be for ever from the throne expell'd:
Nor dare thy heart aspire beyond that throne.

Le. Nor thy reproaches can exasperate,
Nor thy just sorrows mollify my soul.
Sparta, and not myself, impeaches Agis,
And summons him to exculpate himself.
Towards him no other force will I adopt,
(Nor could I if I would,) except to take
From him all means by which he would evade
Just chastisement . . .

Agcs. Just?—Tell me, would'st thou dare
To all-assembled Sparta, in this forum,

Here to present him, from the terror free
Of thy arm'd satellites? . . .

Le. I know not yet

The judgment of the ephori; but . . .

Ages. Thine

Is too well known to me! Let Agis be
Brought to the presence of collected Sparta,
Not of the mercenary ephori,
Or to *his* presence Sparta will repair.
If thou destroy me not before my son,
Although a powerless defenceless lady,
This I protest to thee shall be accomplish'd.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Leonidas, Agiziade.

Agi. I will not, father, from thy side depart,
Nor at thy footsteps will I cease to kneel,
Nor to embrace thy knees, till thou once more
Restore to me my husband; or till thou
With thy own hand join me with him in death.

Le. Beloved daughter, rise! oh never more
Do thou depart from me, I wish nought else.
Thou hast with me magnanimously shared
The many outrages of adverse fortune;
Hence is it just, that thou a partner be
In my prosperity: no one shall be
Over my heart more prevalent than thou:
Thee, as my representative, I make
The arbitress of Sparta:—nor without thee . . .

Agi. What words are these? 'Tis Agis I demand;
Agis, and nought besides. Thou gav'st him to me;
And thou canst never take him from me, no,

If thou take not my life ; never canst thou
From Sparta take him, without dreadful stain
Of violence as a king, and as a man,
Of a denaturalized and cruel heart.

Le. How canst thou thus be wilfully deceived ?
That he is guilty, art thou not convinced ?
But grant that he is guiltless, thou know'st well,
In either case, he is not in my power.
Th' ephori ought to hear him, ought to judge him :
Nor, for his detriment, or his advantage,
Can I, unaided, any thing perform.

Ag. Thou art a father ; and thou lovest me ;
Thou hast already seen my filial love
Brought to a cruel test ; and can it be
That thou would'st now dissemble with thy daughter ?—

By treacherous arts erewhile hadst thou the power
Unaided, to immure him in a prison ?
And, being innocent, canst thou not save him ?
Ah, force me not to think thee . . .

Le. What avails it ?
In this I can do nothing ; furthermore,
'Tis needful that without delay I give
To th' ephori, not only an account
Of my own actions, but of those of Agis.

Ag. Ah no ! I will not quit thee : nor canst thou
A cruel order give, that will not fall,
At least in part, upon thy daughter . . .

Le. Cease ;
Return thou to my palace . . .

Ag. I go with thee.
All wilt thou do, all oughtest thou to do,

Are all things by thy vigilance disposed ?

An. Dost thou not see ? Within these spacious
confiners

Of Sparta's prison, it appear'd to me
Our seats might fitly be arranged ; the place,
Less ample than the forum, will contain
Less of the dregs of Sparta : but, however,
As many ~~here~~ may introduce themselves,
As the completion of our views require,
At every entrance centinels I've placed,
And have in numbers mingled our adherents—
Behold, the place already is half fill'd ;
Nor are there scarcely any of our foes.
As yet the tidings are not fully spread
Of the great trial : and I hope that all
Will be accomplish'd ere th' audacious mother
Comes to disturb it with her headstrong train.

Le. But art thou sure that from such promptitude
Danger may not result ?

An. No trifling force,
Besides our dignity, the cause supports.
There will be need of special circumspection
In detailing the charges ; we must seem
Just to ourselves, yet of the people's good,
More than our own, tenacious advocates.
Some tumult may arise ; to frustrate this
Precautionary schemes are laid. "For us
It will suffice, that Agis from these walls
No more depart alive. "To counteract
The first audacious movements of the people,
Our friends among the citizens, thy soldiers,
The influence of the ephori, and last
Thy own audacity, may well suffice.

Time is meanwhile ensured; and we shall have
From time entire success . . .

Le. Behold the senate,
And all the ephori: the populace
In numbers follow them, and they appear
Not turbulent in aspect; nay, they seem
Pleased at the accusation to assist
Of a subverting monarch. ~~Courage~~ ~~courage~~.
While with insinuating flatteries,
And opportune, their fancies I allure,
Do thou the prison enter, and forthwith,
Agis, well guarded, to our presence bring.

SCENE THE SECOND.

*Leonidas, People, Ephori, Senators: each one place
according to his rank.*

Le. Praise to the gods! I see collected here
The real citizens; and not confused
With the audacious, turbid, abject people,
Who, with their numbers, strive to implicate
You in their error, spite of your consent.
A spectacle unprecedented, now
Attracts the eyes of universal Sparta;
The most important that can ever be
By a free man beheld. A king of yours
Charged by your ephori, and before you
Accused. His accusation you will hear,
His pleading, and the final judgment given,
In which yourselves, I hope, will bear a part.
I, though a king, with joy announce it to you.
Ah! I had not such fate on that dire day,
Fatal to me, to Sparta not propitious,

In which, an exile, from my throne degraded,
Forlorn I wander'd, doubtful of my life.
By guilty violence was I oppress'd,
Unheard and unaccused ; yet more dismay,
Than from my unjust banishment, my heart
Endured from the subversion of the laws,
And from the imminent calamities,
Which threatened Sparta when I left her walls.
At last yourselves convinced of your misfortunes,
Once more reseated me upon the throne,
And, at the same time, Sparta's outraged laws :
Agesilaus, and Cleombrotus,
And the bribed ephori, their partizans,
Ininical to Sparta, ye proscribed.
Agis remains : there are who think him guiltless ;
And perhaps he is so. But meanwhile I wish'd
His person to secure, nor, doing this,
Do I propose in his imprisonment
A further purpose than to clear his fame.
If he were once convicted of offence,
Ye should first hear me for my son-in-law
Pardon implore : his inexperienced youth
Must, in your judgment, as it does in mine,
Make him appear not undeserving pity.
Ephori, senators, and citizens,
Your sacred legislative majesty
Never aspired to exercise a right
Nobler than this discretionary power.
To-day you ascertain your monarch's faults,
And pardon them : for I indeed to-day
Submit to your inspection all my deeds.
It seems to me that this is no light proof
Of my pure heart and equitable rule ;

And to afford to you that proof I *pari*.
 Let Agis by Leonidas be taught
 To tremble at the laws.—But see, already
 Agis presents himself at your tribunal:
 Behold I sit in silence: I await,
 Myself a citizen, from fellow citizens
 The termination of this lofty process.
 With all my powers I swear to countenance
 Whate'er it be, your free, unanimous,
 Your sacred, and immutable decision.

SCENE THE THIRD.

*Anpharus, Agis amidst Guards, Leonidas, People,
 Ephori, Senators.*

An. Ephori, Spartans, king, he, whom I drag
 Before the true tribunal of my country,
 Is Agis of Eudamidas. Erewhile
 He, with Leonidas, o'er Sparta reign'd;
 Him afterwards he banish'd from the throne,
 And a new colleague to himself assumed,
 Cleombrotus. It seem'd to you expedient
 To reinstate Leonidas, who thence
 Resumed the sceptre from Cleombrotus.
 Then to the sacred limits of th' asylum
 This Agis fled; wherefore, himself will tell you.
 While there immured, no longer was he king,
 The throne he had abandon'd: yet not thence
 Became he private; he had not laid down
 His dignity, nor was it taken from him.
 Not guiltless, since he fled to an asylum;
 Not guilty, since he never was accused.
 The gods of Sparta have delivered him

To you to-day; although by none of us
Th' asylum which he chose has been prophaned.
Hence I accuse him now before you all
Of changed, betray'd, and violated laws;
Of stratagems despotically used
Against Leonidas, and the ephori;
Of arbitrary views, as instruments
To whose excess the bribed rebellious dregs
Of Spartan profligates, he strove to gain.
And, lastly, to concentrate in one charge
All his offences, I accuse him to you
Of having violated and betray'd
The delegated majesty of Sparta.

Agis. Truly a solemn and imposing pomp
Is this: but why in such an exigence
Is not collected Sparta here convened?
Why, as th' accused are always wont to be.
Am I not to the forum led?—'Tis true
I see the ephori, a king is here,
And I behold a shadow of the senate.
But yet, as far as I can cast my eyes,
I see no citizens, except a few,
Powerful, and mingled with arm'd satellites.
'The majesty of universal Sparta
May this indeed be deem'd? I, not alone,
Would have all Sparta, but all Greece collected,
'To hear me vindicate my innocence.
Now since within your bosom there does dwell
Such plenary conviction of my guilt,
Say wherefore is it that you wrest from me,
With such a great proportion of my hearers,
At the same time such great part of my shame?

Le. Far as the place permits, thou seest here

A multitude of citizens assembled.—
 To bring thee from the confines of the prison
 Would implicate too much, as thou know'st well,
 The ephori's stern dignity ; too much,
 If thou be'st innocent, thy innocence.
 Sparta heard thee, defending thy retreat,
 Erewhile adduce, that thus thou would'st remove
 All pretext of disturbance, al' pretence—
 For sanguinary measures, from the people :
 Would'st thou amid that people's violence,
 And turbulent vociferation, go,
 A quiet and free judgment to obtain ?

Agis. A quiet judgment, and for you the safest,
 Would it have been at once to have dispatch'd
 The executioner where I'm imprison'd :
 But far less quiet will this process prove
 Than you desire. Terror prompts not my words ;
 No ; of my destiny already sure,
 The forum and this place to me are one.
 I, without hearing it, my sentence know :
 But I indeed shall never thence receive
 A deeper injury, than that which I
 Long in my heart have fix'd to have from you.—
 Judges, spectators, whosoe'er you be,
 I now forewarn you all, that I, condemn'd,
 And slain, within these walls, shall not by death,
 As fain I would do, peace restore to you :
 Nor you, by dragging me to death, for this
 Remain in safety.—I await my doom
 Undaunted. Be the accusations heard . . .

An. I, in the name of th' ephori, address thee ;
 Listen to me ; Agis, didst thou not drive,
 Unheard by thee, Leonidas to exile ?

Agis. He, to the seat of judgment duly summon'd,
Chose rather to escape.

Le. Summon'd I was,
I cannot contradict, but to confront
A virulent tumultuary rabble.—
Can this be judgment, this? . . .

Agis. As much as this,
At least. To thee was flight allow'd : and thence
Thou never wert imprison'd. Heretofore
Means of escape solicited my choice,
But to the prison willingly I went,
And willingly in judgment I appear :
Whate'er that judgment is, I fear it not.
I wish'd it, and exult in its conclusion ;
And in thus making myself heard exult.

An. Didst thou not violate thy country's laws ?

Agis. The sacred institutes of great Lycurgus,
In their primæval purity, I wish'd
To re-establish : they were ne'er repeal'd,
But for a long time had been unobserved.
To such a just and generous design
Leonidas opposed : first artfully,
Then counteracted my designs by force ;
But both were ineffectual : thus subdued
More by his own shame than the force of others,
He, as the lesser evil, on himself
Exile imposed. Let him himself confess,
If injury to me he can impute,
Or life and safety. Sparta with one voice,
At his departure, all his actions blamed,
All mine applauded. Greedy creditors
Were then abolish'd ; wealth was equalized ;
With luxury, the vices in her train,

And torpid indolence, from Sparta fled ;
 And lo ! primæval liberty and virtue
 At once resumed their sway. Dare any here
 Deny th' assertion ?—Of my short-lived reign,
 After the flight of your Leonidas,
 Behold the crimes. ✓

An. Dar'st thou perchance deny,
 That by the bait of such professions caught,
 A speedy desolation overwhelm'd
 The cheated citizens ? The fields, though promised,
 Never divided ; wealthy men impoverish'd :
 The poor dissatisfied ; and both oppress'd.
 Wilt thou deny, too, that to transgress'd laws,
 Such as thou deemest ours, did not succeed
 Thy cruel unparticipated sway ?—
 A sway the more pernicious, since it made,
 To cover its exorbitant designs,
 A specious pretext of pretended laws.

Agis. Whilst I for your sakes for the camp left
 Sparta,
 Whilst to th' Etolians in arms I shew'd,
 To their dismay, regenerate Spartans arm'd,
 From one of th' ephori become a tyrant,
 Agesilaus, in my absence, here,
 To wicked purposes disgraced his power.
 Am I responsible for his misdeeds ?
 I willingly accept their punishment,
 Provided that my country reap the fruit
 Of my imperfect virtues ; virtues which
 You cannot controvert, though full, towards me,
 Of malice and uncharitable thoughts.—
 The restoration of Lycurgus' laws
 Has not offended you : (in this alone

I dared to innovate) but the harsh schemes
Of Agesilaus. What then remains for you,
But to kill me, and to pursue my plans?

An. Say'st thou Agesilaus suborn'd thee
To ruin Sparta?

Agis. To regenerate Sparta.
I of my own accord address'd myself,
Because I am a Spartan.

An. Say, dost thou
For a true king Leonidas acknowledge?

Agis. Leonidas, a Spartan, I acknowledge,
Who in Thermopylæ, for Sparta's sake,
Fell with three hundred Spartans.

An. Answer'st thou
In such a manner? Dost thou thus contemn
The ephori's, the senate's majesty?

Agis. In answering thus I venerate and adore
The majesty of Sparta.

An. Guilty then
Thou dost confess thyself?

Agis. Deem'st thou me so,
Thou who accusest me?—Let us conclude,
Let us conclude this legislative juggling.
Thou dost accuse me; I refute the charges.
I hither came to prove to those that hate me,
That I, a citizen and king, as far
As is consistent with the conscious pride
Of innocence, spontaneously submitted
E'en to the malversation of the laws.—
Now here, whoever you be, hear my last words.

An. What more is there to hear?

Agis. Much; but express'd
In a few words.

An. Thou oughtest not to speak . . .

Agis. Thou, one of the ephori, dost thou not know

The laws, or not remember them? The accused
Address their country, if they wish to do it.

Then listen to me, thou, and hold thy peace.—

And you, oh Spartans, hear.—Of many things

You're not inform'd at all, or misinform'd:

Agesilaus' deeds, the cries of Anpharax,

My silence, and Leonidas's arts,

Have all by turns deceived you. We are all

Now come to such a pitch, that to set free

Each one from error, it is requisite

That Agis perish. I, with my own hand,

Already on myself might have bestow'd

An independent and becoming death.

But this escape from life had render'd me

Guilty in your esteem. I was, and am,

Fully persuaded in my inmost heart,

That from the sentence, be it what it may,

Beneath whose weight I fall, no infamy

Can ever on myself reverberate.

Thence to permit myself hither to be

Before my foes dragg'd living, was my choice,

And here I stand. That death I do not fear,

Ye yourselves will behold. I might to you,

If so I would, yet dearly sell my life.

The terrible cries of the indignant people

Will quickly make this known to you: in short,

That I esteem at a far higher rate

My country than myself, soon will my death

Convince you.—I exhort, nay, I conjure you,

Sparta's redemption and your own to win

From my atoning blood. The lands, the wealth,
 That now infatuate your phantasy,
 Lodged in the hands of few, injure alike
 Those who possess and those who covet them ;
 Those lands, that wealth, since ye would not divide
 Them with your fellow-citizens, from you
 Shall be, and ere long, wrested by your foes.
 The people, deem'd so vile, since mendicant ;
 The Spartan people hating you, ye rich,
 Ye who are stronger even than the laws,
 Numerous that people is ; 'tis goaded on
 By fierce necessity. This very people
 May constitute at once their country's splendour,
 And your salvation, if ye will reflect
 That they, as well as you, are citizens
 Of Sparta, children of the great Lyncurgus.
 If otherwise, they will annihilate
 Sparta, themselves, and you. Now is the time,
 Trust to my words, mature for such a change ;
 The Gods forbid that I should witness it ;
 But they decree its advent : Agis' blood
 Is indispensable to hasten it ;
 And Agis yields that blood. Pity for you,
 Not for myself, I feel. These are the words
 Of one whose only object is to die ;
 Who to the tomb carries no other wish
 Except to save his country. Far beyond
 The reach of malice is the name of Agis :
 It is not needful to make me illustrious
 That others give effect to my designs ;
 Rather it lessens my renown in part
 That others should succeed where I have fail'd.
 Be then the punishment assign'd to me

The final ebullition of your rage ;
 And the first fruit of your exhausted malice
 The restoration of primæval virtue ;
 The re-establishment of the divine
 And lofty institutions of Lycurgus,
 And a true Spartan emulation raised
 For freedom, arms, and patriotic love.

People. Great is the soul of Agis : we have been,
 Perchance, deceived . . .

An. Yes, ye are deceived
 By these seditious falsehoods.

Agis. Ephori,
 What now remains for you to say I know.--
 I of a royal citizen, at length,
 The latest functions fully have accomplish'd.
 I to my prison go, from whence henceforth
 Nought but the name of Agis shall escape.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Leonidas, Ampharus, People, Ephori, Senators.

People. He speaks not as a culprit : he excites
 Involuntary wonder and compassion.

Lc. 'Tis true, oh Spartans : by Agesilaus
 He was seduced ; his crime appears to be
 Worthy of pardon. I myself from you
 Entreat it for my son-in-law ; for him
 That rescued me from death . . .

An. Leonidas,
 Before the senate and the ephori
 Thou standest now ; and these thou should'st address.
 Thy private arguments from public guilt
 Wrest not the penalty ; nor pardon ever

Precedes conviction.

Le. I will never hear,
 Much less myself pronounce, his punishment.
 I will not, no, although he merit it,
 Ever participate in Agis' death.
 From his retreat to drag him, to convict him,
 Before the magistrates, to this alone
 Duty persuaded me, and this I've done :
 No more remains, inimical towards him,
 For me to do.—Ah ! if the people's voice,
 And royal prayers avail to influence
 The senate and the ephori, in them
 We of their clemency shall soon behold
 A noble and a memorable proof.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Anpharus, People, Ephori, Senators.

An. A foe magnanimous, the best of fathers,
 A perfect citizen, Leonidas,
 Has well his task accomplish'd ; it remains
 For us to accomplish ours.—Agis stands
 Convicted of high-treason : Ephori,
 Say what just punishment awaits him.

Ephori. Death.

People. Ephori, all of us implore your pity ;
 If he henceforward trouble not the state.

An. Heard ye those terrible and menacing shouts
 This way approaching ? In his cause once more
 The people rise already. While he lives
 Can Sparta rest ? 'Tis folly to believe it.

Ephori. Die ! let him perish, the rebellious traitor !
 Let Agis die ! . . .

An. Soon shall ye be obeyed.—
 Meanwhile, oh citizens, avoid at present
 To meet the infatuated guilty people.
 But let us with becoming boldness, we,
 The ephori, the majesty of Sparta,
 Present ourselves.—Guards, intercept the passage.
 Let us depart; and let our aspect be
 Nor timid nor elate. A mark'd indifference
 Soon makes the people recollect themselves.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Inside of the Prison of Sparta.
Agis.

Agis. I hear tremendous howlings, and a loud
 Tumultuary uproar round my prison.—
 Ye Deities of Sparta save my country!—
 It grieves me that I did not keep a sword,
 Whence, with my hands, I might at once extinguish
 My own and Sparta's troubles at a blow.
 Those whom Leonidas will send to slay me,
 Cannot delay much longer.—Much-loved children..
 My mother, ... my beloved spouse, ... farewell ...
 No **more** shall I behold you! ... I bequeathe
 To you, tender remembrance of myself ...
 But for **my** mother's destiny I tremble:
 She's in the tyrant's power ... What do I hear?
 Who comes? The prison opens! ... Who is this?..
 My consort? ...

SCENE THE SECOND.

Agis, Agizjades.

Agi. I am with thee, much-loved Agis . . .
 I from the palace of my father fled,
 Where I, as in a prison, was immaured.—
 The people cleared for me the path that led
 To this foul dungeon; and the very guards
 Had not the heart my entrance to forbid.—
 At length I am with thee . . . Oh spouse, I come,
 If it be possible, to rescue thee,
 Or with thee to expire.

Agis. Beloved wife ! . . .
 My heart thou rendest : . . . How much joy . . . and
 pain . . .
 Thy presence brings me . . . To preserve my life,
 (For by the death of many citizens
 I, if I would, might do it) thy true love
 Alone could influence me. But thou know'st well
 I ought not to prefer thee to my country,
 Nor would'st thou that I did it. Leave me then
 To die ; preserve thy own life ; and defend
 Those precious pledges of our love, our children . . .

Agi. Vainly should I attempt to rescue them
 From the fierce hatred of Leonidas :
 Unnatural father ! in his prosperous state
 I know him now without disguise ; erewhile
 In his adversity I was deceived.
 No weapons now remain to me but tears ;
 These he despises : Sparta, with her arms,
 Or nothing else, our children can preserve
 From his atrocious rage.—But thou, at least,
 Should'st prove thyself a father, and defend

Thy own life for thy offspring . . .

Agis. Oh my wife !

In these last moments what a terrible conflict
 Dost thou not raise within me ? Thou know'st well
 I love my children ; but their death is yet
 Uncertain ; and 'tis certain that in streams
 The blood of Sparta's citizens would flow
 If I attempted force. And these and those
 Are both my children ; but the people are
 His dearest children in a just king's sight.—
 O lady, if thou darest to survive me,
 Thou canst defend them better than myself !
 That courage, tender and sublime at once,
 Which made thee the companion of thy father ;
 That courage which induced thee to become
 The faithful friend of my adversity ;
 That will suffice to be a guide to thee
 To avert destruction from their innocent lives.
 Guilty and fierce as is Leonidas,
 He is thy father : if thy little ones
 Thou claspest in thy arms ; if thy pure breast
 Become a refuge to their innocence,
 He cannot have the heart to murder them.
 Ah ! run from hence, fly to thy tottering babes,
 As their defender watch ; for them live on,
 Or only die with them ; for if they perish,
 Nothing compels thee then to drag on life.

Agis. Alas ! . . what shall I do ? . . If I should leave
 thee . .

My barbarous father would by force keep me
 In life ; . . and what a life ! . . Widow'd from thee . .
 But even if he let our children live, . . .
 Their throne would then be taken from them . . Ah !
 I will expire with thee . . .

Agis. Oh lady, hear me, and be pacified . . .
 Would'st thou be less heroic as a mother,
 Than as a daughter? Thou fear'dst not my wrath,
 The day that thou accompani'dst thy father :
 Thy children didst thou for his sake desert,
 And thy beloved consort : would'st thou now,
 When thou dost leave him for thy children's sake,
 Tremble at that same father? Thou with them
 May'st fly from hence : thou hast t' oppose to him
 Efficient weapons, thy own innocence :
 Lastly, thou hast a thousand means to try,
 Ere thou resolve on death. Ah ! I conjure thee,
 Beloved consort, try them ; once again
 Resume thy lofty heart ; nor weaken mine
 With female lamentations. Wouldest thou
 That I expired in tears? Ah, no !—If thou
 Art worthy *Agis*, do not thou force me
 To make that *Agis* of himself unworthy.

Agis. Say, was paternal fondness ever deem'd
 Unworthy of a father, to prefer
 His children to himself? . . .

Agis. Before our children
 Our country must be loved. For a long time
 My blood have I deem'd consecrate to her ;
 Thine, if it needful be, should'st thou devote
 To our beloved children : but thou givest,
 If thou for their sakes dost consent to live,
 To them, and to myself, a higher proof
 Of thy regard. Thy tears may yet do much ;
 More than thou dost imagine : in the people
 Will they, if in *Leonidas* they do not,
 Excite compassion ; and to them to save,
 E'en without loss of blood, my little ones,

Will be most easy. Finally, reflect,
 That Agis wholly dies not while thou livest.
 I, in a vulgar woman, should admire,
 As proof at once of passionate regard
 And sublime heroism, the fixed will
 Not to survive her husband ; but I hope,
 Nay I demand from thee, and thou the wife
 Of Agis, by that union with myself,
 Art pledged, intrepidly, to more than death,—
 A life of sorrow for thy children's sake . . .
 Weeping I ask it of thee ; may these tears
 Sink in thy heart . . . Ah ! for thyself alone,
 And for our children, hast thou seen at length
 Thy Agis weep.

Agis. Irrevocably then
 Hast thou decreed to die ? . . .

Agis. Thou canst not doubt
 My innocence.—Receive my last embrace ;
 And take it, in my name, to our dear children.
 Tell them, that for my country's sake I die ;
 Tell them that if, as adults, to my throne
 They e'er should come, they, for their father's death,
 No other vengeance ever must inflict,
 Than, imitating him, to renovate
 The sublime institutes of great Lycurgus :
 And, if in this, as I have done, should they
 Encounter adverse fates, bid them, like me,
 In this immortalizing enterprize,
 As men of valour sacrifice their lives.

Agis. I cannot speak . . . Must I abandon thee ? . .

Agis. A faithful counsellor, in my worthy mother,
 Wilt thou possess, if still her life be spared !—
 Now go ; ah leave me ; go.—A wife, a queen,

A mother, Spartan, and a citizen
Art thou; these lofty characters support.

Agi. Oh heaven! . . . Eternally . . .

Agis. Cease, cease, I pray thee.

Agi. My tottering feet scarcely support my frame.

Agis. Ah come! when once thou hast departed
hence,

Thou soon wilt find protection and support.

Agi. Oh misery! . . . The iron gate unfolds . . .

Agis. Guards, I consign to you your monarch's
daughter.

Agi. Agis . . . Ah cruel! . . . I will never quit him . .

Agis! . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Agis.

Agis. Ah wretched me! . . .

How many deaths must I in one endure? . . .

That grief which husbands and which fathers feel,

What grief can ever equal?—Sparta, Sparta,

How much thou costest me! . . . Leonidas

Is yet a father: in my heart I feel

A grateful presage that he will consign

My children to his daughter.—Cease my tears.—

My death is now approaching. As a Spartan,

And as an innocent king, I ought to die . . .

Oh death, how tardy are thy steps!—But yet,

Behold, again I hear my prison gate

Grate on its hinges? . . . And I also hear

The shouts redoubled round these walls! . . . What
now

Can this portend? . . . Whom do I see? . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

*Agesistrata, Agis.**Agis.* . . . Oh heavens! . . .

Oh mother! . . .

Ages. Son, in this thy hour of need,
 To thee thy mother never could be wanting.
 A liberty, that's worthy of ourselves, —
 I bring thee. — In a far different shape
 To thee I would have yielded it; but when
 There was a time for this, thou didst thyself
 Divest me of all means t' accomplish it.

Agis. What would'st thou with these Spartan cries
 obtain? . . .

Ages. In vain doth Sparta cry. The treacherous
 tyrant

The place hath so well guarded with his soldiers,
 That our adherents nothing can perform:
 In vain do they attempt to force their ranks;
 Inert, abash'd, disgraced, discomfited,
 They are repell'd. Among our impious foes
 Forward I darted; from behind I heard
 Fierce voices in my favour, which exclaim'd,
 "Miscreants! dare you to interdict approach
 "To Agis' mother?" . . . Anpharus then saw me;
 Made them give way to me, and here I'm driven.

Agis. Perfidious! He would also make thee cap-
 tive.

Ah, mother! To what useless risk for me! . . .

Ages. Risk! dost thou say? Beside my son, I come
 To certain death. Behold, in proof of this,
 The gift I bring.

Agis. A sword!—Oh genuine mother!—
My breast did not contain another wish
Than to possess a sword to rescue Sparta,
And to withdraw myself from death-wounds, given
By an ignoble hand: and thou, oh joy!
Bringest one to me!—Give it me, . .

Ages. Chuse thou:
There are two swords; mine is the one thou leavest.

Agis. Oh heaven! . . . and wilt thou? . . .

Ages. Dost thou then account me
Mother of Agis, or a vulgar woman?
Few years at best remain for me to live:
Sparta, which thou in vain dost hope to save,
Already is enthrall'd: if she remain,
Thy mother is Leonidas's slave.
Now speak; I hear thee: darest thou council me
On such conditions to consent to live?

Agis. What can I say? I am a son.—Oh mother,
Suffer me first to die: although enslaved,
Sparta is not extinct; hence other hands
May liberate her yet. Perchance my blood
To freedom may restore her: but if I,
Abject, in order not to shed my own,
Had let the citizens in my defence
Lavish *their* blood, Sparta had been no more.

Ages. Sparta too certainly expires with thee.—
And wouldest thou that I, a Spartan mother,
Survive my son and country?—Son, embrace me.

Agis. Oh mother! . . . Thou surpassest even me
In dignity of soul.—Now give to me,
And take the last embrace. I dare not weep
In thus embracing thee; for in thine eyes
I see thy tears by fortitude restrain'd.

Ages. My Agis, . . thou indeed art worthy Sparta . .
And I of thee am worthy.—Once again
Let me embrace thee . . . Whence this deafening
noise?

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Leonidas, Ampharus, Soldiers with drawn swords.

Agis, Agesistrata.

Le. At length we are victorious.

Ages. What's your purpose?

Agis. Ah! do not leave my side.

An. Soldiers, your swords

At Agis first, then at his mother, aim.¹

Agis. Like me, conceal thy weapon for awhile;
Let us await their coming, and be silent.²

An. Who now restrains you? Why delay ye thus?
Tear them asunder instantly by force.

Agis. Which of you, which, would dare lay hands
on us?—

Royal Leonidas, dost thou behold?

Even thy own bribed soldiers, stupified,

Immoveable, in Agis' presence stand.—

But I will soon deliver thee from fear.

One thing alone do I demand of thee.

Le. It is . . .

Agis. That thou attentively would'st watch
Thy daughter, that she imitate me not.

¹ The soldiers approach Agis.

² The soldiers, seeing Agis immoveably expect them, all of
them pause at once.

Le. Is then her love for thee so strong?

Agis. More strong
Than thy abhorrence.—But she loyes thee too,
And hath given proof of it; and, finally,
Thou art her father: my last words are these:—
I die—May Sparta . . . only . . . profit by it . . .

An. He has a sword!

Agis. Two swords I brought.—Oh son!
I follow thee; and fall . . . upon thee . . . dead.

Le. I am struck dumb with terror and with wonder . . .

Ah, what will Sparta say? . . .

An. Their lifeless bodies
Should from the people be conceal'd . . .

Le. Ah, never!
From our own eyes we never can conceal them.

He brandishes his sword aloft, and kills himself.
She also discovers her sword, and kills herself.

SOPHONISBA.

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SOPHONISBA.

SCIPIO.

SYPHAX.

Roman Soldiers.

MASINISSA.

Numidian Soldiers.

SCENE, — The Camp of Scipio in Africa.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Syphax, with Roman Centurions.

Sy. You may at least here leave me to myself
Till Scipio's return.—My hands, my feet,
Are manacled with fetters; Syphax now
Stands in the centre of the Roman camp;
Of every means of flight is he bereft:
Grant him, at least, a respite from your presence.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Syphax.

Sy. How hard to bear is military pride!
Should their commander as in real valour,
In haughtiness surpass them . . . 'Tis not so;
Scipio is known to me: within my palace,

At Cirta, he was formerly my guest :
 Most gentle and humane he then appear'd . . .
 Credulous Syphax, dost thou speak in earnest ?
 Then Scipio came to thee to ask for aid ;
 Nor was he then thy conqueror.—Vanquish'd king !
 Taken in fight, and bound in fetters, dragg'd
 Within the enemy's camp, dost thou yet live ? ..
 Oh Sophonisba ! to what obloquy
 Hast thou reduced me ? Now, when I no more
 Ought, or design to live, I am so fall'n,
 That e'en the power of voluntary death
 No more is mine ? .. But hark, the trumpet's sound
 Scipio's approach announces. See. He comes.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Scipio, Syphax.

Sci. Let all my train retire. A retinue
 Would be an insult to a captive king.—
 Syphax, provided that the lofty pangs
 Of vanquish'd kings admitted of relief,
 Thou should'st now hear me speak to thee in terms
 Of pity ; but the greatness of thy heart
 Is known to me, to which each pitying word
 Would be an added wound : hence, at this time,
 Nothing will I attempt, except to wrest,
 With my own hands, thy unbecoming fetters.
 This thy right-hand I ought indeed to unloose ;
 A pledge of friendship and of fealty,
 I well remember that thou gavest it
 To me in Cirta.—But what do I see ?
 My kindness thou disdaine'st ? Motionless,
 And fierce, thou fixest on the ground thine eyes ?

Ah ! if in battle Scipio had subdued thee,
 He with no other fetters than thy own,
 Than by reminding thee of thy sworn faith,
 Thy person had enthrall'd. Then yield, I pray,
 These iron manacles of thee unworthy ;
 Yield them to me : raise thy disconsolate brow :
 And fix thine eyes, erect, on Scipio's face.

Sy. On Scipio's face ? Oft have I seen it near,
 With soul undaunted, in the ranks of war :
 Fortune, the arbitress of all things, now
 Wills that I should dare not to see it more.
 Nought should the Romans to this camp have borne
 But the cold relics of what once was Syphax :
 But to the valiant, death, though coveted,
 Sometimes is not allowed ; and I am here,
 Alas ! a lamentable proof of this ;
 Ah, wretched that I am !—Hence are these chains
 Become my portion ; hence my downcast looks
 Are to the dust condemn'd : for never more
 Can I presume to raise them to the eyes
 Of a triumphant foe.

Sci. Of the subdued
 Scipio is not the foe ; and though till now
 Fortune hath look'd on him with smiles alone,
 He's not elated from a prosperous fate,
 As from an adverse he would ne'er be abject.—
 I am resolved to overcome thy pride
 By courteous violence. Behold unloosed
 Thy unbecoming chains : as man to man,
 Equal with equal, now to Scipio speak.

Sy. Thou speakest courteously, and thou art courteous.
 If to a king it were supportable

To be o'ercome; 'twould be so by thy arms.
But what can I now utter, that may seem
To thee becoming my past dignity,
And worthy of my present wretchedness?
And what remain for thee to say to me
That I already know not?

Scz. I? To thee

I will confess, that yet so great I deem thee,
And so magnanimous, that I doubt not
To ask of thee the reason of thy change.

Sy. It is not usual to make bare the heart
Except to faithful and experienced friends;
And kings are seldom, or are never bless'd
With friends like these. Perhaps I, although a king,
Was once not undeserving real friends:
And, as a proof of this, I now to thee,
Without disguise, will manifest my heart.
In thee, a generous foe, 'twere more discreet
Than in a feign'd friend, thus to place reliance.
Then listen to me.—Thou wert born a Roman,
And I an African: the citizen
Of an illustrious commonwealth art thou;
I of a numerous and powerful people
Was once the monarch. Interposing seas
Sever'd from mine thy country: I ne'er placed
In your Italia my encroaching feet;
Thou standest sword in hand in Africa:
The vanquisher of Carthage, 'tis your hope
To bring all Africa beneath your sway.
Carthage to me contiguous, was hence
Alternately my foe and my ally:
And though she also, equally with Rome,
Execrates kings, her people, less than yours,

From power and arrogance intolerant,
 Was thence by me less bitterly abhorr'd.
 By every commonwealth a monarch's heart
 Is tacitly aggrieved; what anger then
 Must that excite in him which dares to shew
 Towards him a haughty front?—Behold the whole
 Divulged to thee: my heart was resolute,
 To hate you e'en to death, as insolent
 And predatory foreigners: to swear
 To you allegiance and fidelity,
 After your memorable deeds in Spain,
 Became my interest.

Sci. But thou by proof
 Hadst known the valour of the Roman arms;
 Why didst thou violate thy faith with Rome?
Sy. And what will Scipio say, if I divulge
 To him the naked truth?—That mighty Scipio,
 Whose heart, th' abode of friendship and of pity,
 And of all elevated impulses,
 Hath hitherto proved inaccessible
 To love alone.—The blandishments of beauty,
 That irresistible captivity
 Which love inflicts, hath wrought in me this change,
 To thee do I confess it; and feel not,
 In saying it to thee, the blush of shame
 Suffuse my face. A citizen thyself,
 The love of fame impels thee to surpass
 Thy fellow citizens; hence art thou deaf
 To other impulses: a king who sees,
 Seated upon his throne, no rival near,
 Such an incentive needs; hence, deaf to fame,
 His other flatter'd passions render him.
 Believe thou this from an unhappy king;

For he may be sincere. Great as thou art,
 Feel pity from it rather than contempt,
 For I disdain it not from Scipio only.

Sci. I never felt the flames of love, but I
 Respect, and even fear, his boundless power.
 Oft have I fled from him; for it is best
 T' anticipate his arrows, to whose wounds
 All after remedies prove impotent.
 Thou, ere thou saw'st her, should'st have felt mis-
 trust

Towards Sophonisba: finally, she was
 The child of Asdrubal, in Carthage born,
 Imbued with rancour and with hate towards Rome
 E'en with her very milk: if thou wert then
 By thy necessities united to us,
 Clearly might'st thou foresee, that detriment
 Must to thyself assuredly result
 In forfeiting our friendship.

Sy. Dost thou then
 As nothing deem, that which so often sways,
 So often fascinates unwary man?
 Hope? I imagined, that, to Asdrubal
 United by such ties, in Carthage none
 Would equal me in power: then having seen
 The charms of Sophonisba, caught, subdued,
 In short more fetter'd than e'en now I am
 In this thy camp, with inadvertent steps,
 I from one error to another stumbled.
 For Sophonisba's sake I forfeit now
 My kingdom, my renown, and, what is worse,
 My self-esteem: and yet, would'st thou believe it?
 Vain would I languish out a few hours more
 In hated life, that I at length may hear

Of her security. On her account
Do no foreboding thoughts of infamy
Oppress my heart : her soul, like mine, is lofty ;
Nor could she ever ; more than Syriax could,
Living, be dragg'd behind thy car & captive.
Now hear, not thoughts that do become a king,
But the wild ravings of a frantic lover.
A jealous fury tortures me, and makes
My vacillating life protracted death.
Perhaps in Cirta, in my very palace,
Is Sophonisba, by your arms subdued,
Become already the illustrious prey
Of Masinissa, of my mortal foe.
To him a promised spouse ere to myself ;
Perhaps now he burns for her . . . at such a thought,
With desperate inexplicable rage
I feel myself o'erwhelm'd. I wish to die,
I ought to die ; and powerless as I am,
A thousand means of death do I possess.
But ah ! I know not how, nor can I die,
Till I have learn'd her destiny. The prey
Of Masinissa, ah ! (if prayers of mine
With thee weigh aught) ah ! never, never grant
That she his prey become . . . Oh Heaven ! . . . I burn
With rage : . . . But whither does that rage impel me
Beyond my royal dignity ?—No more
Remains for me to say . . . permit that now
I to my tent withdraw : I would conceal
My unbecoming grief. Excepting Scipio,
No man should see me in the Roman camp
With face more ruffled than becomes a king.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Scipio.

Sci. Unhappy king! His words excite in me
 Equal compassion and surprise.—But grieved
 Am I at heart at that which he has told me.
 By Masinissa, in beleaguer'd Cirta,
 Will Sophonisba doubtlessly be seen:
 And should he fall into the snares of love?
 And should he waver in his faith to Rome?..
 Oh valiant warrior, by myself beloved,
 No less than indispensable to Rome,
 For thee I tremble.—What unwelcome cares
 Remain for thee, oh Scipio! How much grief
 Does it cost generous hearts to practise force
 Even on vanquish'd foes! Should I be then
 Constrain'd to practise it against a friend?..
 Ah, this indeed, this is the only duty
 Of a commander, that my soul abhors.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Sophonisba, Masinissa, Numidian Soldiers.

Ma. Lady, pause here: behold the leader's tent.
 Scarcely will Scipio have been heard, or seen,
 By thee, than all suspicion from thy heart
 Will be dispell'd.

So. Oh Masinissa, yet
 Art thou not satisfied? I give to thee,
 I, daughter as I am of Asdrubal,

A lofty and a terrible of love
 In coming with thee to the Roman camp.
 But, that I should sustain th' abhorred sight
 O' th' Roman leader? .. 'tis too much . . .

Ma. This camp
 In which we stand, thou may'st as much pronounce
 Numidian as Roman. A strong band
 Of my troops here are placed, and I am here
 No unimportant pillar of the war.
 Daughter of Asdrubal art thou no more ;
 Widow no more of Syphax, since thou art
 The promised spouse of Masinissa.

So. Ah !
 Let not the friendship which binds thee to Scipio
 Blind thee too much. He, whatso'er he be,
 Is evermore a Roman ; hence he deems
 All things subservient to Rome ; nor can he
 To any enemy of Rome be friendly.
 His rage towards me will not be pacified
 With having overcome, disgraced, and slain
 Syphax : oh no ! Cirta, besieged and burn'd,
 The Massasyllii to the heavy yoke
 Subjected all, have not appeased in him
 Th' ambitious cruel thirst. Now, at the sight
 Of Sophonisba almost in his hands,
 Rightfully deem'd by him, for so I am,
 In placably the enemy of Rome,
 Now, think'st thou not, that in his haughty heart
 He cherishes th' insulting hope, to drag
 Me through the streets of Rome bound to his car ?
 Yet this I apprehend not ; though a woman . . .
Ma. Oh Heaven ! what thoughts are these ? While
 there remains

Within these veins of mine a drop of blood,
 Can that e'er be? Ah no! believe it not;
 Thy hate drives thee now; thou know'st not
 Scipio.

So. Hatred and love deceive me now alike.
 Here ne'er should I have come; but in the world
 There doth remain for me no place of safety.
 It pleased my heart hither to follow thee,
 And to my heart exclusively I trusted.
 But my renown, my judgment, and my duty,
 Appointed me, among its mouldering ruins,
 A sepulchre in Cirta

Ma. Dost thou grieve
 That thou hast followed me? Alas! my life
 Is irksome then to thee...

So. To die not thine
 Would now alone afflict me: and to this
 Dost thou expose me. Thou art well aware,
 Oh Masinissa, that e'en 'mid the flames
 Of Cirta's royal palace, 'mid the death
 Of my defeated people, from thy lips
 Impassion'd sentiments I dared to hear.
 Alas!... Already for a long time, I,
 By the renown of thy transcendent virtues,
 Which fill'd all Africa, had been enthral'd.
 I, from my tenderest infancy, to thee
 Destined by Asdrubal, at once grew up
 Thy mistress and thy spouse. Then, like myself,
 Wert thou the bitter enemy of Rome:
 To Carthage and my father, afterwards,
 It seemed good to marry me to Syphax,
 And to thyself it also seemed good.
 To be the friend of Rome: thus destiny

Disjoin'd us utterly . . .

Ma. Ah ! we are now,
 I swear to thee, for ever reunited.
 Thou with me reignest, or I die with thee.
 Having both personally seen and prov'd
 The sovereign virtues of the mighty Scipio,
 And having never seen thy peerless beauty
 Were then the reasons that I fought for Rome.
 Syphax had ever been my enemy ;
 He had despoil'd me of my throne ; reduced
 By adverse fortune to extremity,
 I found, excepting Scipio, no friend
 In all the world, th' indissoluble tie
 Of sacred gratitude bound me to him.
 Since have I, combating in her defence,
 Amply deserved the benefits of Rome :
 But Scipio's benefits, his lofty, pure,
 Disinterested friendship, can alone
 By friendship, and by homage to his virtues,
 Be recompensed by me. Thee, thee alone
 Than Scipio more I love ; thee only now
 Prefer to him ; for far more than myself
 Do I love thee.

So. To give me then a proof,
 Worthy of both of us, of this thy love,
 Swear to me thou, that thou wilt never let me
 Living be dragg'd from Africa.

Ma. 'Tis useless,
 Yet, since thou wilt'st it, by this sword I swear it.
 Should I have brought thee here, if I had thought
 That here thou wert in danger ? In my realm
 I might securely have transported thee
 With my Numidians : but the call of war

Summon'd me home ; I never from thy side
 Can be dissever'd : Africa and Rome
 Shall learn to pay thee homage as my consort :
 Hence I, an enemy to all disguise,
 Will now proclaim thee such.

So. At length secure
 In my proposal, and thy solemn oath,
 I tranquillize myself . . . But hitherward
 A multitude advances : to thy tents
 Meanwhile, 'mid thy Numidians, I retire.

Ma. Since it seems good to thee, so do. This way
 Scipio advances ; I will speak to him.
 Ere long I will rejoin thee.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Scipio, Masinissa.

Ma. Scipio,
 I never more exultingly embrace thee,
 Than when a conqueror I return : I seem
 More worthy of thee then.

Sci. Oh Masinissa,
 Thou'rt now become one of our main supports ;
 Th' artificer of glory to myself
 At the same time art thou : hence witness, Heaven,
 How much I love thee ; and that love thou knowest.—
 But tell me, (to the Roman general speak not,
 But to thy Scipio,) tell me, dost thou now
 Return indeed a conqueror ?

Ma. By my hand
 Cirta besieged, and by my hand destroy'd ;
 And all the residue dispersed and slain
 Of the dead king . . .

Sci. How speakest thou? E'en yet
Hast thou to learn that Syphax li es! . .

Ma. Oh Heaven!

What do I hear? . . .

Sci. 'Tis true, that dead in fight
Rumour reported him He in that fight
Fell wounded, but not mortal was the wound,
And thence by Lelius taken in my camp
A captive . . .

Ma. Syphax lives? And in this camp?

Sci. He is the noblest fruit of our success.
But what do I behold? Does this afflict thee?

Ma. Oh! . . . what . . . do I . . . not . . . feel! . . .

From my surprise . . .

But . . . wherefore . . . with such . . . cold formality . .
Dost thou receive me? . . . What dost thou conceal
Within thy breast?

Sci. Ah Masinissa, thou,
Yes thou indeed within thy breast dost hide,
And to thy faithful friend, a mighty secret.
Grief and distraction, rather than surprise,
Are on thy face alternately express'd.
Now whence could this arise in thee, if thus
Syphax restored were not an obstacle
To some conceal'd propensities of thine?

Ah Masinissa!—All I know; to me
Thy silence doth reveal it; for thyself,
Excepting this, nought in the world I fear'd.
By her alone whom now into this camp
Thou hast enticed, by her, and no one else,
Thy glory, and the glory of thy friend,
At once may be obscured. I did not stand
In Cirta at thy side: to flames of love

Hence hast thou sacrificed a distant friend.
But yet, I do not of thy deeds complain;
Thou givest me an ample proof of friendship,
In not depositing thy prize elsewhere
Than in my camp; in wishing to confide
The conflicts of thy lacerated heart
To Scipio's heart alone.

• *Ma.* — That Syphax lives
I hear most unexpectedly.—I hoped
In Sophonisba to have found a consort : .
To me was she betroth'd ere given to Syphax :
He ineffectually defended her
Against our arms ; and to a conquer'd king,
Taken in battle, there is nothing left.
But Syphax, though subdued, in heart is lofty ;
Nor long will he, I feel assured, survive
This his disgrace.—But, be it as it may
With him, listen, oh Scipio, to my thoughts.—
A warm and sincere friend thou long hast found
In Masinissa : equally sincere,
And more warm as a lover, learn that he
Derides all obstacles. A lukewarm flame
Never yet enter'd a Numidian heart :
Or I will be loved Sophonisba's spouse,
Or with her breathe my last. Within thy camp
I was myself impatient to conduct her :
Here only were the wishes of my heart
Thoroughly satisfied ; here, with lofty voice,
Did glory, honour, friendship, virtue call me ;
Here, without forfeiting my love, I hope
Completely to discharge my several duties.
From my commander, and my faithful friend,
I wish to learn how we may best succeed

To vanquish Carthage ; by what arts of war
 Rome's power and splendour may be best increased,
 And glory for ourselves ; and, finally,
 How I may best ensure my happiness.

Sci. Wert thou my only son, I swear to thee,
 I should not mourn, as now I mourn, the blind
 And youthful error that hath thus misled thee.
 Our glory, the prosperity of Rome,
 The imminent and total fall of Carthage,
 And thy unrivall'd, genuine happiness,
 All, all were in our power ; before that thou
 Vanquish'd in Cirta, to th' assaults of love
 Submittedst to captivity : but thou
 Hast taken all from us, and from thyself,
 With this thy fatal love.—But no ; thou canst not
 Stifle the cries of thy upbraiding heart ;
 Towards Syphax never canst thou be unjust ;
 Nor canst thou ever to thy only friend
 Be cruel and ungrateful. This thy love
 Is by the life of Syphax now condemn'd,
 Dissever'd, and annull'd : nor ever thou . . .

Ma. Nor ever ? . . . Sophonisba shall this day
 My consort be ; I swear that she shall be.
 And if, with living, Syphax would protract
 My anguish and his infamy, he ought,
 Upon this spot, himself, with his own hand,
 With his own sword, to slay me ; or himself
 To-day, by my hand immolated, fall.

Sci. Syphax defenceless, and a prisoner,
 Is in our camp ; and in his heart conceives not
 'Gainst Masinissa an unworthy thought.—
 Thou ravest now ; but I am well assured,
 If once thine eyes beheld that wretched king,

Thou generous, far from treating him with scorn,
Ah yes! would'st be the first to pity him.
But let us grant, that, be it how it may,
By some means or by other, Syphax die,
And hence thou be the tranquil possessor
Of Sophonisba, to what party then,
Think'st thou, would'st thou betake thyself?

Ma. To Rome,
And to my Scipio bound eternally,
No power on earth . . .

Sci. But tell me, more than Rome
Lov'st thou not Sophonisba?

Ma. I? . . . At present
That would I not examine.

Sci. Wretched friend!
I, ere thyself, already know thou dost.
I know, that having sacrificed thy interest,
Thy judgment, and the sacred austere names
Of gratitude, of friendship, and of faith,
As victim to a luckless destiny,
Thou rushest on destruction. Thou canst not
Asdrubal's daughter at thy side long keep,
And persevere the advocate of Rome,
And make thyself th' abolisher of Carthage.
Thy fate I fervently regret. For kings,
The enemies of Rome, thou knowest well,
Or soon or late, what ruin is reserved.
I speak not thus with menacing intent,
Oh no! suspect it not: may Heaven avert
That I should ever be the instrument
Of the just rage of Rome against thyself.
This sword of mine, which formerly avail'd
To reinstate thee in thy throne, ah no!

Shall never with thy not inferior sword,
Which hath augmented so illustriously
Rome's lofty victories, for mastery strive.
No, rather than 'gainst thee, would I direct
Its point against myself: but tell me thou,
Am I collected Rome? I am, thou know'st,
A private citizen of Rome; nor arms,
Nor counsellors, nor captains, doth she want.
Another leader in my place will come,
With equal fortune, with superior judgment,
And less compassion, to these fated shores;
And he will make thee recollect thy faith,
Though pledged so solemnly, so weakly kept.

Ma. Now, would'st thou that a man who is thy
friend,

Should, to the terror of precarious ills
In future times, yield that which he denies
To yield to friendship? Ill thou knowest me.—
In short, I ask of thee, whether of Cirta,
Spoil'd by my sword and my Numidians,
And by my blood and theirs; whether to-day
The booty of that Cirta doth belong
To Rome or to myself? if Sophonisba,
My promised consort, by myself alone
Conducted hither, in this camp is deem'd
The wife of Masinissa and a queen,
Or if she be the slave of Rome?

Sci. —She was,
And is, (alas, but too unquestionably!)
The wife of Syphax still.

Ma. I understand thee.
Oh agony! . . . and dost thou hope? . . .

Sci. To thee,

Oh Masinissa, I resign the choice :
 From post to post defenceless in this camp
 I wander ; thou by thy Numidians here
 At once may'st cut me off ; thou may'st thyself
 Plunge in my heart thy sword : but to thy ruin
 I will not suffer thee to rush, if first
 Thou kill me not. But if thou have the heart
 To wish my ruin, of my own accord,
 I, for thy sake, embrace it. Keep thy prize :
 Rome, and her conscript fathers, then shall hear me
 Th' accuser of myself : I must confess,
 That to our private friendship I was pleased
 To sacrifice the interests of Rome,
 And of thyself ; and I must, as the fruit
 Of my equivocal regard for thee,
 Reap unequivocal disgrace.

Ma. Oh Scipio,
 Thy too great friendship is a thousand times
 More cruel to myself than menaces,
 Or arms, could ever be . . . Wretch that I am ! . . .
 My heart thou rendest.—But no power can thence
 Extract the firm inextricable dart
 That love hath planted there. Thy words infuse
 Corroding poisons to the cureless wound :
 This is indeed unheard-of agony . . .
 Make me at once outrageously ungrateful,
 And treat me as a foe inveterate ;
 Or as a pitying friend bear with my woes . . .
 Thou see'st my tears ; those tears canst thou re-
 strain ?—

What do I say ? Ah vile ! What dare I say
 In Scipio's presence ?—Thou hast hitherto
 Beheld me frenetick.—Let this suffice.—

Shortly shall Scipio, the Roman leader,
Learn what has been th' immutable resolve
Of Masinissa, the Numidian king.

Sci. Ah hear me !

SCENE THE THIRD.

Scipio.

Sci. Hence he flies ! I will pursue him :
In this distracted state I will not leave him ;
Spite of himself he should be saved ; his heart
Is noble ; my solicitude he merits.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Sophonisba.

So. Ah wretched me ! What can have happen'd
now ?

What fatal, what ferocious mystery
Doth Masinissa harbour in his breast ?
What hath vindictive Scipio said to him ?
Ah evermore, I evermore foresaw
That fatal to us both this camp would be.—
Oh Masinissa ! . . On my countenance
Thine eyes were fix'd, swimming with undropt tears,
And yet thou dar'st not speak to me . . . With words
Broken and fainting now thou call'st me thine ;
Now stern and desperate thine arid eyes,
With a ferocious recklessness, from me
Thou turn'st away ; upon the naked earth
Panting thou castest thy convulsed limbs ;

And with terrific howlings didst invoke
 Th' infernal furies . . . Ah, thou hast transfused
 Already thy own furies in my breast.—
 Be they whate'er they may, this heart possest
 A presage of the menaces of Scipio.
 All I foresee ; yet nothing do I fear.
 Now that he is my open enemy,
 As he should be, now will I Scipio hear,
 And make him hear the thoughts of Sophonisba . . .
 But who is this coming towards me ? . . . Is this
 Reality ? . . . Oh Heaven ! . . . Syphax alive ? . . .
 And in this camp ? . . . Oh unexpected sight !

SCENE THE SECOND.

Syphax, Sophonisba.

Sy. A deep amazement on thy face is painted,
 Oh lady, in beholding me again ?—
 I should have been no more : in this respect
 Fame was propitious, but my fortune adverse.

So. Oh unexpected and appalling sight !
 Now is the horrid mystery at once
 Fully unravell'd . . .

Sy. To thyself thou mutterest ?
 Speak, speak to me. Behold me ; I am he,
 Thy consort am indeed, who, for thy sake,
 My sceptre and my honour having lost,
 Deprived of both, in Roman fetters bound,
 Yet on the brink of the much wish'd-for tomb
 Awhile delay my steps to learn thy fate.

So. What words are these ? . . . where shall I hide
 myself ? . . .

Sy. Ah ! do I see on thy bewilder'd face

At once the characters of shame and death?
Thy desolate impenetrable silence
Speaks a clear language: in thy heart I read
The conflict of a thousand impulses.
Yet no reproaches shalt thou hear from me;
Although insulted, and in fetters bound,
By all deserted, yet for thee, oh lady,
Far more than for myself I feel compassion.
Thou knowest if I love thee.—I'm aware
That Asdrubal's commands, the bitter hate
That thou for Rome hast in thy breast, alone
Were thy conductors to my bed; for me
Thou never feltest love. Thus I myself,
Thou seest, plead in thy defence. I know
That with another not unworthy flame
Thy bosom glow'd, or ere thou wert my spouse.
Love, by experiment, I comprehend.
Its force omnipotent, its madnesses,
I know them all; and hence, spite of myself,
Have ever loved thee. Thou, by laws divine
And human, forced to love me, not for this
Was it e'er possible for thee to do it.
Hence jealous rage, by little and by little,
Feeds on my heart: I thirsted for revenge;
And on my hated rival still could wreak it
Although a captive . . . But thou conquerest, lady:
More than a jealous, I, a sincere lover,
Would now leave thee in safety by my death.—
Pardon thee, groaning; in a horrible life,
Persist, though hating it, and this alone
To behold thee once more; strongly at once
Desire thy death, and happiness with others;
Now as the luckless source of all my ills

Would curse thee ; weeping, would adore thee now
 As the sole blessing left to me in life . . .
 Behold, in what distracting agonies
 The latest moments I drag on for thee
 Of my protracted and opprobrious life.

So. . . . I will presume, although with trembling
 voice,
 To unveil to thee my thoughts.—Little remains
 For me to say : magnanimously thou
 My cause already hast too warmly pleaded :
 Daughter of Asdrubal, and wife of Syphax,
 It now remains alone for me to die
 As worthy of these names.—At the report
 Spread of thy death, 'tis true that I presumed
 My hand to promise ; but 'tis not yet given :
 Thou livest, and to Syphax I belong.
 T' avenge thy cause and mine at once 'gainst Rome,
 No firmer champion could have been secured
 Than Masinissa. Blinded, I confess,
 And caught by his incomparable prowess,
 I purposed to estrange him from the Romans,
 And make him the deliverer of Carthage.
 But Syphax lives ; and I return once more,
 Whatever fate he chuse, to be of that
 A constant, and not quite unworthy, partner.
Sy. Thy lofty proposition deeply soothes
 A wretched monarch, and a spouse not loved ;
 But to a lover, as I am to thee,
 Ardent beyond expression, it is death.
 I have already, and a long time since,
 Fix'd in my heart my fate, which thou, oh no !
 Should'st never share with me. Then, lady, now
 Listen to my entreaties and commands . . .

But I see Scipio, who towards us advances ;
 He is the only person in the world
 To whom I would address my latest accents.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Scipio, Sophonisba, Syphax.

Sy. Hear me, oh Scipio.—In thy presence vanish
 Dissembling purposes : all shame departs
 That would forbid me to confess a weakness :
 Thou, although none in thy great heart abide,
 Great as thou art, conceivest them in others,
 And pitiest them humanely.—This is she,
 (Attentively regard her,) the sole cause
 Is she of all my wretchedness ; but yet
 All my affections I have placed in her.
 Thou for myself hast not yet seen me tremble ;
 Now for another I descend to prayers ;
 I am compell'd to do it . . .

So. Certainly
 Asdrubal's daughter causes not thy prayers.
 Am I not equally with thee secure ?—
 What, Scipio, canst thou do to me ? I, born
 A Carthaginian, enemy to Rome,
 And in the Roman camp a prisoner,
 I yet undaunted stand . . .

Sci. The fatal power,
 The disappointing power of destiny
 Places us all in hard extremities.
 I do not, most assuredly, exult
 In your calamities : and thou in vain
 Now in my presence makest a parade
 Of thy innate antipathy to Rome.

What though the cruelties of Annibal
Banish from Roman bosoms all compassion,
Thence do I not a rancorous hate indulge
Against these enemies. If I am forced
To meet with them in fight, victorious,
I envy and admire them; but, subdued,
I pity and I aid them.

Sy. Thence, to thee,
That which to no man I would e'er have said,
I trust myself to say . . .

So. What would'st thou say?
Thou for thyself would'st certainly not ask
Aught from the conqueror. Nothing e'er from him
Would I receive; not even his compassion.
What have you more to say? Before great Scipio)
Say who would venture to degrade himself?
But, e'en were I degraded, to behold
Before my eyes the spoiler of my race,
The instrument of ultimate destruction
To my illustrious country, that alone
Would now inflame me with magnanimous rage.
The foe of Scipio, though he be humane,
I am as much as I'm the foe of Rome:
To make myself worthy of this, I ought
Rather in Scipio now t' excite surprise,
Than puling tenderness.

Sci. Each lofty soul
Which meets with adverse fate, almost makes me
Abhor my own prosperity.

So. A joy
Fatal, but yet a joy, glows in my breast,
Now that I am allowed at length t' unfold
My feelings to the noblest of the Romans.

The mingled conflicts that assail my heart,
Thou only canst conceive, who art at once
A perfect man and citizen.—To him,
Cradled in Carthage, no less than to him
Who pass'd his childhood on the Tyber's banks,
The name of country, more than all things else,
Is graven in the heart. Effeminate thoughts
In me, although a woman, if they gain'd,
Gain'd but a second place. I loved those best,
Proud Romans, who best hated you. Your foe
Was Masinissa once; and at the sound
Of his magnanimous and youthful feats
Was I inflamed. Syphax was then of Rome
I know not whether the ally or vassal.—
These now are my last words; I speak to Scipio,
And to thee, Syphax; artifice avails not;
For both of you know well the heart of man.
The traces of our earliest impressions
Remain profoundly graven in our breasts:
Hence hearing that the death of Syphax gave
Entire superiority to Rome,
And Masinissa's image to my thoughts
At the same time occurring, I design'd
(Perchance my heart suggested it) to wean
From Rome her champion, and to make of him
A shield for Carthage and myself. Thence I
Hither among your eagles came a foe.
And the audacious hope that swell'd my heart
To entice from your alliance Masinissa,
Induced me to relinquish many duties;
I feel the dereliction; • culpable,
And self-convicted, I proclaim my guilt;
And I already am prepared to make

A lofty reparation. Perhaps my fate
 Led me towards you with an invisible hand,
 To give no mean impression of myself:
 Behold a path is open'd to me now
 To manifest to Rome what lofty soul
 May animate a lady born in Carthage.

Sy. My unexpected life, I clearly see,
 Is the sole absolute impediment
 To every view of thine: but my existence
 Will be a vain and transitory shadow.
 My real life in that same moment ceased
 When ceased my liberty: thou knowest well
 For what I did survive. I learn from thee
 Heroic fortitude. Although thy words
 Inflict a horrid torment in my heart,
 Thou should'st have told thy thoughts to me alone;
 I left thee worthy to avenge my fate,
 And so I leave thee now . . .

So. Oh doubt it not,
 Others remain to avenge us. Let each man
 His duty here accomplish; mine are changed
 By thy revival—I've divulged to thee
 The most conceal'd affections of my heart:
 This Scipio heard; to whom I were a foe
 Unworthy, had I spoken otherwise.

Sci. Thy words, at once sublime and frank, convince me
 That thou esteemest me no vulgar foe.
 Ah! that I could . . .

So. I've said enough.—Now, Syphax,
 We should withdraw . . .

Sy. Soon will I follow thee . . .

So. No, no; henceforward will I never quit thee.

Sy. And yet thou should'st abandon me . . .

So. I will not ;

And this resolve in mighty Scipio's preence
I with an oath confirm.—Ah, come with me :
From the so many black and horrible storms
That now assail us, may a transient respite
At least be granted. I, although a woman,
Have hitherto by force restrain'd my tears :
Oh Scipio, 'tis impossible to weep
When thou art present : but imperious Nature
At length will have her tribute. 'Tis the part
Of fortitude to bear adversity ;
But not to feel its pressure when it comes,
Rather implies stupidity than strength.

Sy. Ah wretched me ! Why have I lived so
long ? . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Sci. This is a noble woman : worthy she
To be a Roman.—I scarce check my tears.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Masinissa, Numidian Soldiers.

Ma. Let all, obeying my commands, at night
Be ready with their steeds : and silently
Let them, oh Boccar, ambush where I told thee.—
Faithful Guludda, thou, at all events,
Meanwhile be ready with the fatal bowl.
Of every monarch 'tis the sole resource
Who would become the friend or enemy

Of execrable Rome.—Go hence ; and let
Nothing of this transpire.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Masinissa.

Ma. Oh Masinissa,
Should'st thou stoop, to defend thy rights, to art ? ..
Ne'er for myself would I do this ; but I
Should place in safety whom I've placed in danger,
Or perish with her.—Do I in this place,
With difficulty, a brief audience gain ? ...
Oh heaven ! is she then absolutely changed ? ...
But see, she comes ... I tremble ...

SCENE THE THIRD.

Sophonisba, Masinissa.

So. I expected
No more to see thee ; and in truth I ought not ;
But (when thou hear'st it, canst thou trust my words ?)
Syphax himself enjoin'd it ...

Ma. Influenced
By scorn or pity ?

So. 'Twas magnanimous ;
And 'tis sufficient to awake in us
A noble emulation. He himself
Would fain converse with thee : but he commands
That I precede him. And that ...

Ma. Can I bear
A sight like this ? ...

So. Art thou less great than he ?

Fears he thy presence?

Ma. Now can I tell thee first? . . .

So. What canst thou tell me that I ought to hear?

Ma. In vain dost thou inflict on me new torments:
I would inform thee that I here enticed thee,
And that I would, at all events, myself
Drag thee from hence.

So. I gave myself to thee,
Thou knowest it; from thee I take myself.
A lofty duty, fatal to myself,
Demands this sacrifice. I feel assured,
By following Syphax, to withdraw myself
From every ill. Do thou then now from me
Learn to be strong. This is the camp of Rome:
Scipio is station'd here; a monarch, thou
Art station'd here: and I am station'd here
Asdrubal's daughter: tell me, would'st thou now
That we be govern'd by a vulgar love?

Ma. Ah! with a flame far different to thine
My bosom is consumed . . . In thee alone
I place my fame, my glory, and my greatness . . .
Thou should'st be mine; although my kingdom pe-
rish,
The whole world perish, . . . mine thou shalt be. I
Perils and losses neither know nor fear.
I am prepared for all, except to lose thee;
And sooner . . .

So. Thou with having all my heart,
Ah be thou satisfied . . . Prove not thyself
Of this unworthy . . . But, what do I say?
The sight, the sight alone of Syphax, powerless,
Vanquish'd, and captive, yet serene and firm,

Will of itself restore to thee thy reason.

Ma. . . . Ah wretched me! . . . Could I at least
alone! . . .

But I am not less generous than you;

I am indeed far different as a lover :

And I prepare to yield to you of this

A memorable proof . . .

So. See, here is Syphax.

Ma. He too may hear me; nor will you have then
Courage to scorn me.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Syphax, Sophonisba, Masinissa.

Ma. Now before thine eyes,

Syphax, thy mortal foe presents himself.

But thou beholdest him in such a state,

That he no more thy indignation merits.

Sy. All indignation from a king in chains

Would be ridiculous. If before me

My rival formerly had been presented,

While I possess'd a sword, I might have then

Display'd to him no inefficient rage :

Now cruel fate hath nothing left to me

But a firm visage and impassive heart.

Hence shalt thou hear me speak to thee with mild-
ness.

Ma. My desperate and immeasurable grief

Should be to thee no unimportant solace :

Then learn what that grief is.—See me : I am

Far more enchain'd than thou art, far more van-
quish'd,

More stripp'd of judgment, and far less a king.

Thou tookest formerly my realm ; but then
 Thou wert not, as thou'rt now, my conqueror ;
 An indefatigable foe, more fierce,
 More ardent, always I arose again
 From my defeats ; till I alternately
 Became a conqueror, regain'd my own,
 And took from thee thy realm — But thou exult,
 Triumph ; this sublime lady yields to thee,
 Whom thou hast twice from Masinissa snatch'd,
 Entire superiority o'er me.

So. And wouldest thou that I indeed should blush
 At thy weak courage ? . . .

Ma. I've not yet given
 Proof of my courage to you : 'twill at least
 Keep pace with my despair.—You are, I see,
 Both by premeditated death sustain'd.
 Worthy of both is this resolve : and I
 Feel its “ sublime attraction ” much as others.
 And to each one of you 'tis suitable,
 Singly consider'd. Thou, a fetter'd king,
 Longer wilt not, nor oughtest, to exist.
 Thou art determin'd, thou, the wife of Syphax,
 Daughter of Asdrubal, before all Rome
 To shew a lofty and intrepid spirit :
 Nor art thou sway'd by any impulses
 Save those of rage and hate.—But how can Syphax,
 He who adores thee, who hath been impell'd
 To his entire destruction for thy sake,
 And thy sake only ; he who doth possess
 No less an ardent than a noble heart,
 Oh heaven ! ah how . . . how can he bear to hear
 That his beloved lady is to perish ? . . .

So. And could he, even if he would, divert

Me from my duty?

Sy. Whence canst thou thus know
My thoughts?

Ma. I, by far different furies sway'd,
I cannot now from thee conceal my own;
Nor will I change them, except first I die!
At all risks I wish Sophonisba safe,
And she (I understand) will not be saved,
Cannot be saved, if Syphax also is not.—
Already my Numidians are accoutred:
If at the gathering of the shades of night
Thou, Syphax, to be one of these wilt feign,
I swear to thee to be thy guide myself,
And, with thy Sophonisba, to conduct thee,
Unhurt and unassail'd, e'en to the gates
Of your beloved Carthage. 'There may'st thou
Collect arms, steeds, and troops; for while a king
Retains his freedom, he is yet unconquer'd.
I will abandon Rome's abhorred banners,
And I for Carthage and our Africa,
And for thyself perchance, will henceforth fight.
Whenever thou shalt have regain'd thy realm
And sovereign sway, so that, as king with king,
We to the trial of the sword may come,
I then will claim of thee with this my sword
This most beloved woman, whom I now
To thee surrender for no other cause
Than to avert from her an immature
And undeserving death.

So. Thou fruitlessly
Proposest an impracticable scheme . . .

Sy. His language intimates a lofty heart;
Me he offends not; nay, he does impel me

Another, and more certain, means to offer,
Easier for him, and less unworthy Syphax;
And 'tis . . .

Ma. You, by adversity subdued,
Deem that impracticable which to me
Would be most easy : but, if honour prompt you,
Dare and attempt with me. Always at hand
Is death, the last and certain remedy ;
To men of courage he is always present :
But indispensable to all of us
He is not yet. Not till to-morrow's dawn
Deluded Scipio of our flight will hear :
Just as he is, and in his heart humane,
My rights he may respect ; at all events,
Thanks to our fleet-hoof'd steeds, by break of day
We shall have pass'd pursuit. If any one
Should make the attempt to follow us, I swear
That I would rather e'en in Scipio's breast
Immerse my sword, than ever yield you to him.
This sword of mine, which hath so many times
Already saved me ; this, whence I regain'd
Not only my own realm but that of others,
Will that suffice not to place both of you
In Carthage safe? Now, for a brief while, yield,
Oh Syphax, yield to fortune : finally,
Yet may'st thou fly from hence ; nor wilt thou be
To me at all indebted. Foes we were,
And foes once more we shortly may become :
The danger of an object loved alike
By both of us, 'tis this, and this alone,
That silences our hatred and revenge.
Hear me address thee suppliantly ; in thee
Is thy deliverance placed. But yet, if cruel

Thou dost, è'en more than thou dost love thy wife,
 Detest thy foe, oh wreak on him, I pray thee,
 Before thy death, a plenary revenge.
 Behold my naked sword ; plunge it in me.—
 Kill me or follow me.

Sy. Oh Masinissa ! . . .
 Amid the turbulence of thy intense
 And passionate ferocity, a ray
 Of hope yet shines to thee ; thou art not conquer'd,
 Nor powerless, nor a captive : thence thou seest
 Human affairs with other eyes than mine.
 But in my heart there is conceal'd, beneath
 A brow of undisturb'd serenity,
 In my sad heart, more agonized than thine,
 There is conceal'd such a tormenting flame,
 Such grief, such desolation, and such rage,
 That language fails to represent my anguish. . . .
 Yes, my distraction never can be known
 To one, who loving, is beloved again . . .
 Ah, so much is my agony more fierce,
 Inflicted by the asps of jealousy,
 As I see Sophonisba more intent
 The affections of her lacerated heart
 Magnanimously to hide. To a severe,
 But to a worthy conflict, I'm impell'd.
 By her unvanquish'd courage.—Jealous rage,
 Ambition, vengeance, all my furies yield
 To love alone.—Now more than half the knot
 Already is unloosed. Listen to me,
 Oh lady. I love thee, for thy sake only,
 Nor for myself : hence had I, as a spouse,
 Rather myself resign thee to another,
 Than for my sake behold thee die in vain.

So. What do I hear? . . . What dar'st-thou say to me?

Sy. I hope that thou wilt hear thy consort's prayers ;
And where his prayers suffice not, wilt obey
His last commands.—The wife of Masinissa
Thou hither camest . . . I restore thee now
To Masinissa, wife.

So. Ah ! no . . .

Sy. Oh thou
Who could'st protect her when she was not thine,
Now that I've made her thine, wilt do it better,—
Farewell for ever. To pursue my steps
Let none of you presume.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Masinissa, Sophonisba.

So. No power on earth
Shall now prevent me from pursuing thee.—
Farewell, ah Masinissa !

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Masinissa.

Ma. Oh despair ! . . .
Brief is the time : . . . both of them would forestall
me . . .
I only fear to be less swift than they.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Scipio, Centurions.

Sci. Already I know all. Let each of you
 Watch as the guardians of the Roman tents
 During the approaching night : but I give
 An express order to you, that you should
 Abstain with care from vexing the Numidians
 With obstacles or insults. Go from hence ;
 Let all things pass in quietness.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Scipio.

Sci. Thy rage
 Thou should'st have wreak'd against my breast alone,
 Ungrateful Masinissa ; or on me
 Its violence, like billows on a rock,
 Should have been broken.—But confused he bears
 His wavering steps towards me ; perchance he knows
 The destiny of Syphax . . . How I feel
 Pity for him !—Ah ! come to me ; ah come ! . . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Scipio, Masinissa, Numidian Soldiers at a distance.

Ma. Here, oh Guludda, wait for me.—Prepared
 I was not for this meeting,

Sci. What, would'st thou
 Avoid me ? I am evermore thy Scipio :

Thou now in vain seekest thyself elsewhere ;
I only can restore thee to thyself.

Ma. I was bereft of reason on that day
In which I made with you a guilty traffic
Of life and honour for degrading chains.
But for this step perchance I yet may make
The due atonement ; and 'twill be sublime.
Then wilt thou see that I have perfectly
Regain'd my reason.

Sci. I've already told thee,
Thou may'st, oh Masinissa, yet destroy me :
But while I breathe thou art constrain'd to hear me.

Ma. Time fails me now for this . . .

Sci. Time fails thee now !
But what dost thou expect ? Thy stratagems
Divulged to me are all : clandestinely
Armed and accoutred, thy Numidians stand
Within their tents ; thou hast resolved from hence
To rescue Syphax, and with him . . .

Ma. If thou
Already know'st so much ; if the base arts
Of a tyrannical spy have so far urged thee,
That thou hast purchased those who would betray me
E'en 'mong my troops, to consummate thy task
Add force to stratagem, since thou canst boast
More soldiers than myself. Thou seest me
Always prepared to die ; never to change.

Sci. Thou wrongest Scipio, and he pardons thee.
Towards thee no other weapon will I use
Than that of truth ; with that will I subdue thee.
Thy Sophonisba, who loves thee so much,
(Would'st thou believe it ?) she herself awhile
Fully revealed to me thy stratagems . . .

Ma. What do I hear? Oh heaven!...

Sci. I swear to thee,

Oh Masinissa, that I speak the truth.

Erewhile, by his express command, she was

Refused admittance to the tent of Syphax;

Hence, stung to agony by rage and grief,

All thy designs to me did she divulge.

But she divulged in vain: thou hast the power

Still, if thou wilt, to rescue her from hence.

Carthage in thee her champion may possess;

I interdict it not: the injury

On me alone will fall; on me alone,

Who, at one stroke, my fame, my friend shall lose.

But ah! may heaven avert, that finally

Greater calamities o'erwhelm thee not.

Ma. She!... Sophonisba!... For thy sake betray
My interest!... 'Tis incredible. From whence...

Sci. She, far superior to her destiny,
Intends to give thee other proofs of love.

To stern necessity the loftiest yield:

The last and desperate resolve of Syphax

Gives to her noble heart a strong incentive.

Ma. What meanest thou by these ambiguous
words?...

Of what proof speakest thou?... Of what resolve

Of Syphax?...

Sci. What! dost thou not know it? Scarce

Was Syphax in his tent arrived, than swift

As lightning, on the sword of the centurion,

That as a guard was station'd there, he rush'd;

The hilt he planted on the earth, and fell,

Collecting all his might, upon the blade...

Ma. Oh blest, thrice blest is he! Thus is he freed.

From execrable Rome . . .

Sci. With his last breath
He order'd that admission there should be
To Sophonisba forcibly denied.

Ma. And she . . . Ah, now I clearly comprehend
The horror of her state ! But oh, too far
Is mine remote from Syphax' destiny !
Conquer'd by thee, by his own hand he fell :
I, not as yet subdued, would be destroyed
By a Roman sword, but by that sword in fight.

Sci. Ah no ! thou oughtest not like them to perish.
Rather than death, and worthier of thyself,
Sublimier fortitude thy life would shew.

Ma. Live without her ! . . . I have not power to
do it . . .

Cannot I rescue her by any means ? . . .
I will yet see her only once more.

Sci. Ah !
Assuredly her converse may avail,
More than I can avail, to re-excite
Its noble impulses within thy breast.—
Behold her ! 'tis her wish to plant herself
Near to my tent. Before the eyes of Rome,
And in the presence of all Africa,
She wishes to fulfil each cruel duty.
Hear her ; with her I leave thee : Scipio
In both of you confides ; thou canst not bear
Her to surpass thee in sublimity.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Sophonisba, Scipio, Masinissa.

So. Ah ! pause ; oh Scipio. I repair'd to thee ;

And me dost thou avoid?

Sci. A sacred duty
Enjoins that I prepare for the dead king
A splendid funeral pile . . .

So. Hither at least,
I pray thee, soon return. This will henceforth
Be my perpetual dwelling place; and here
I swear to wait for thee.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Sophonisba, Masinissa.

Ma. Perfidious lady!
And dost thou also to inhuman pride
Add treachery?

So. Treachery!

Ma. Treachery, yes; while I
Prepare to save you, or to die for you,
Thyself revealest my design to Scipio.

So. —Syphax allowed me not to die with him.

Ma. He wish'd thee safe with me.

So. Already he
His freedom had regain'd; that which I seek,
And shall obtain.—I cannot, if my fame
I would not forfeit, from the Roman camp
Withdraw myself with thee. With a true love
Too much thou lovest and hast loved me,
That I should save myself at such a risk:
I am too worthy of thy tenderness,
E'er to allow thee to do this. I have,
In making manifest thy purposes,
Taken nought from thee but the fatal power
My honour and thy glory to betray.

Ma. Thou art deceived ; nought hast thou taken
from me.

Yet I may all achieve : rivers of blood
I yet may shed : all mine I will pour out
Ere I leave thee a slave ! . . .

So. Am I a slave ?

Such dost thou now account me ?

Ma. In the power
Of Rome art thou.

So. Of Rome ! As yet I am
In my own power ; or in thy power, if thou
Feel'st for me yet the pity of a king.

Ma. Thou mak'st me tremble . . . on thy coun-
tenance

I see a horrible security,
The harbinger of voluntary death . . .
But I would lead thee . . .

So. All, all will be vain :

There is no force on earth that can avail
To counteract my will, which is in me
The child of duty. Indispensable.

Immutable, impending, is my death,
And 'twill, I hope, be free ; although I am

Of all things destitute ; although I left
In Cirra, inadvertently, the last,

The only friend of subjugated kings,

My faithful poison ; from my lover's lips

Although I heard a sacred solemn oath,

That he would wrest me from the hands of Rome ; . .

An oath committed to the vagrant winds.

Amid these haughty eagles yet a queen,

Daughter of Asdrubal, no less secure,

No less collected in myself I stand .

Than if in Carthage, or within my palace.—
But thou, thou'speakest not. . . . Distracted looks,
Swimming with tears, thou fixest on the ground. . . .
Ah! trust me, my affliction equals thine . . .

Ma. The effect of each is different : destitute
Of courage, weaker than the weakest woman,
Trembling I stand ; while thou . . .

So. The state of each,
May be dissimilar : not so our hearts . . .
Believe my words : although I do not weep,
I feel my bosom rack'd with agony :
I am a woman ; nor make I parade
Of virile courage : but there doth remain
No path for me to take save that of death.
If I had loved thee less, I might perchance
Have been the partner of thy flight to Carthage ;
And, at the price of my renown, have gain'd
A short-lived vengeance, with thy troops, o'er Rome :
But I would not expose thee, for my sake,
To an unprofitable risk, The fall
Of Carthage is inevitable now :
Ill can a corrupt and discordant city
Cope with united and harmonious Rome.
I should have lived too long if I had seen,
On my account, my country overwhelm'd,
And thee with it hurl'd headlong to destruction.
Faithful remain to Rome, continue still
A grateful friend to mighty Scipio.
To raise thee to great power, to give thy virtues
An ample scope for action, all this now
My death can do, and nothing but my death.
Thy good, even more than mine, to this compels me

Ma. Dost count me then so vile as to expect

That I should struggle to survive thy death ?

So. I wish thee to excel me : and to prove
Thy brighter excellence thou should'st survive ;
And in the name of thy renown do I
Enjoin thee to do this. To thee would death
Be a disgrace ; for to it love alone
Could prompt thee : life were a disgrace to me,
Since love alone could force me to endure it.
My death, thou know'st, is indispensable ;
To me thou swarest it ; and such a gift
Would yet be grateful to me from thy hands :
Not by refusing it canst thou avert
My settled purpose. In this very place,
Before the camp, immoveable and mute,
Yet three more days, which I shall add to this,
In which I have not slaked my burning thirst
E'en with a draught of water, will give me
Entire ascendancy o'er Rome. But ah !
Is there compassion in thee, thus to leave me
To a protracted agonizing death,
When thou hadst promised to procure me one
Both brief and dignified . . . Fool that I was !
Trusting in thee alone, I hither came . . .

Ma. Thou on our death hast then resolved ? . . .

So. On mine.

If madly thou, against my express will,
Turnest thy arms against thyself, now hear
A furious threat, and if thou dare, defy it ;
I will be dragg'd a living slave to Rome,
And will ascribe to thee my infamy . . .
Ere the return of Scipio, I conjure thee,
Restore me, thou, to perfect liberty :
If thou art not forsworn.

Ma. What dost thou ask? . . .
Oh Heaven! . . . I cannot arm thee with my sword . .
Thy dubious aim . . .

So. The sword requires, 'tis true,
A hand accustomed to its management.
A bowl of speedy and effective poison
Were more adapted to my female courage.
I see not far from hence thy faithful son
Guludda; for thy sake he always bears it;
Call him; I am resolved.

Ma. Oh day of woe!—
Give me that bowl, Guludda.—Now go thou
Wait for me at my tent.—And is this then,
Is this at once the first and latest pledge
Of my unbounded love, which thou would'st wrest
By force from me? . . . Too certainly I see
That thou on no terms will consent to live;
And to a long and agonizing death
I cannot leave thee.—I will not shed tears, . . .
Because thou weapest not: behold, to thee
The deadly potion I present myself
With tearless eyes . . . but only on condition,
That in its contents I shall have my share . . .

So. Yes, thou shalt have it, as thou meritest.
Now of my lofty love at length thou'rt worthy.
Give me the bowl.

Ma. Oh Heaven! . . . Hand and heart
I tremble . . .

So. Why delay? Ere Scipio comes
The deed must be accomplish'd . . .

Ma. Take the bowl.

Alas! What have I done? Oh agony! . . .

So. I've quaff'd it to the dregs: I see already

Scipio returns.

Ma. Dost thou deceive me thus?
I have a sword remaining yet; and I
Will follow thee.¹

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Scipio, Masinissa, Sophonisba.

Sci. Ah no! While I have breath...

Ma. Ah traitor! In thy bosom I will then
Take vengeance for that immolated lady.

Sci. Behold my breast defenceless: I will loose,
That I may be thy victim, thy right-hand;
Except for this, in vain thou wishest it.

So. Oh Masinissa, if thou dar'st, I hate thee...

Sci. Me, me alone, thy hand may immolate;
But, while I live, thou shalt not turn thy sword
Against thy own breast.

Ma. —I am once more myself.—
Scipio, of all hast thou bereft me now,
E'en to my sense of honour.

So. Thankless man! . . .
Canst thou calumniate Scipio? He grants me,
As he has granted Syphax, a free death;
While perhaps he might have interdicted it:
By dint of force he wrests thee from the shame
Of an effeminate opprobrious death:
And darest thou, ungrateful, darest thou

¹ He is about to stab himself; Scipio, strenuously holding back his arm, prevents his doing it.

Calumniate Scipio? Yield, ah yield to him!
He is at once thy brother, father, friend.

Ma. Now leave me: thou in vain dost check my
rage.

Death . . . death . . . I yet . . .

So. Ah Scipio . . . leave him not:

Out of my sight elsewhere drag him by force:
He was born great, and thy sublime example
To greatness may restore him: from the world,
From Rome, conceal his weakness . . I . . already . .
Feel my tongue palsied . . and my blood congeal'd . .
To him I give not . . . not to rend his heart . .
The last farewell.—Ah drag him hence . . I pray
thee;

And me . . . leave me to die, . . . as ought to die
Asdrubal's daughter . . . in the . . . Roman camp.

Ma. Ah! . . By despair . . by grief . . I am bereft
Of all my strength . . I scarce can breathe . . much
less

Inflict . . . a blow . . .

Sci. Come; I will ~~use~~ towards thee
The violence of a friend:^a I will not leave thee . .
Nor ever shall thy grief destroy thy life,
If with thyself thou do not slay thy Scipio.

Dragging him forcibly towards the tents.

THE FIRST BRUTUS.

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BRUTUS.	VALERIUS.
COLLATINUS.	<i>People.</i>
TITUS.	<i>Senators.</i>
TIBERIUS.	<i>Conspirators.</i>
MAMILIUS.	<i>Lictors.</i>

SCENE,—The Forum in Rome.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Brutus, Collatinus.

Col. Ah where, ah where, oh Brutus, would'st thou thus

Drag me by force? Quickly restore to me
This sword of mine, which with beloved blood
Is reeking yet . . . —In my own breast . . .

Bru. Ah! first

This sword, now sacred, in the breast of others
Shall be immersed, I swear to thee —Meanwhile
'Tis indispensable, that in this forum
Thy boundless sorrow, and my just revenge,
Burst unreservedly before the eyes

of universal Rome.

Col. Ah no! I will
Withdraw myself from every human eye.
To my unparallel'd calamity
All remedies are vain: the sword, this sword
Alone can put an end to my distress.

Bru. Oh Collatinus, a complete revenge
Would surely be some solace; and I swear
To thee, that that revenge thou shalt obtain.—
Oh! of a chaste and innocent Roman lady
Thou sacred blood, to-day shalt thou cement
The edifice of Roman liberty.

Col. Ah! could my heart indulge a hope like this!
The hope, ere death, of universal vengeance...

Bru. Hope? Be assured of it. At length, behold
The morn is dawning of the wish'd-for day:
To-day my lofty, long-projected plan
At length may gain a substance and a form.
Thou, from a wrong'd unhappy spouse, may'st now
Become the avenging citizen: even thou
Shalt bless that innocent blood: and then if thou
Wilt give thy own, it will not be in vain
For a true country shed... A country, yes,
Which Brutus will to-day create with thee,
Or die with thee in such an enterprise.

Col. Oh! what a sacred name dost thou pronounce!
I, for a genuine country's sake alone,
Could now survive my immolated wife.

Bru. Ah! then resolve to live; co-operate
With me in this attempt. A God inspires me;
A God infuses ardour in my breast,
Who thus exhorts me: "It belongs to thee,
"Oh Collatinus, and to thee, oh Brutus,

“ To give both life and liberty to Rome.”

Col. Worthy of Brutus is thy lofty hope :
I should be vile if I defeated it
Or, from the impious Tarquins wholly rescued,
Our country shall from us new life obtain ;
Or we (but first avenged) with her will fall.

Bru. Whether enslaved or free, we now shall fa-
Illustrious and revenged. My horrible oath
Perhaps thou hast not well heard ; the oath I utter
When from Lucretia's palpitating heart
The dagger I dislodged which still I grasp.
Deaf from thy mighty grief, thou, in thy house,
Scarce heardest it ; here once more wilt thou hear
By my own lips, upon th' inanimate corse
Of thy unhappy immolated wife,
And in the presence of assembled Rome,
More strenuously, more solemnly renew'd,
Already, with the rising sun, the forum
With apprehensive citizens is fill'd ;
Already, by Valerius' means, the cry
Is to the multitude promulgated
Of th' impious catastrophe : th' effect
Will be far stronger on their heated hearts
When they behold the chaste and beauteous lady
With her own hands destroy'd. In their disdain,
As much as in my own, shall I confide.
But more than every man thou should'st be presen-
Thine eyes from the distracting spectacle
Thou may'st avert : to thy affliction this
May be allow'd : yet here should'st thou remain :
E'en more than my impassion'd words, thy mute
And boundless grief is fitted to excite
Th' oppress'd spectators to indignant pity . . .

Col. Oh Brutus ! the divinity which speaks
 thee, to lofty and ferocious rage,
 hath changed my grief already. The last words
 Of the magnanimous Lucretia, seem
 in a more awful and impressive sound,
 to echo in my ears, and smite my heart.
 Can I be less inflexible t' avenge,
 than she to inflict her voluntary death ?
 Can th' infamous Tarquinius's blood alone
 Can I wash out the stigma of the name,
 common to me and them !

Bru. Ah ! I too spring
 from their impure and arbitrary blood :
 but Rome shall be convinced that I'm her son,
 Not of the Tarquin's sister : and as far
 as blood not Roman desecrates my veins,
 I swear to change it all by shedding it
 for my beloved country.—But, behold,
 the multitude increases : hitherward
 numbers advance : now it is time to speak.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Brutus, Collatinus, People.

Bru. Romans, to me, to me, oh Romans, come :
 great things have I t' impart to you.

People. Oh Brutus,
 Can that indeed which we have heard be true ?

Bru. Behold ; this is the dagger reeking yet,
 yet warm, with th' innocent blood-drops of a chaste
 and Roman lady, slain by her own hands.
 Behold her husband ; he is mute ; yet weeps
 and shudders. Yet he lives, but lives alone

For vengeance, till he sees by your hands torn,
 The heart torn piece-meal of that impious Sextius,
 That sacrilegious ravisher and tyrant,
 And I live yet, but only till the day,
 When, wholly disencumber'd of the Tarquins,
 I see Rome free once more.

People. Oh most unparallel'd,
 Calamitous catastrophe! . . .

Bru. I see
 That all of you upon th' unhappy spouse
 Have fix'd your motionless and speaking eyes,
 Swimming with tears, and by amazement glazed.
 Yes, Romans, look at him; ah see in him,
 Ye brothers, fathers, and ye husbands, see
 Your infamy reflected. Thus reduced,
 Death on himself he cannot now inflict;
 Nor can he life endure if unavenged . . .
 But vain, inopportune, desist from tears,
 And from astonishment.—Romans, towards me,
 Turn towards me, Romans, your ferocious looks:
 Perhaps from my eyes, ardent with liberty,
 Ye may collect some animating spark
 Which may inflame you with its fostering heat.
 I Junius Brutus am; whom long ye deem'd,
 Since I so feign'd myself, bereft of reason;
 And such I feign'd myself, since doom'd to live
 The slave of tyrants, I indulged a hope
 One day to rescue, by a shock of vengeance,
 Myself and Rome from their ferocious claws.
 At length the day, predestined by the gods,
 The hour, for my exalted scheme is come.
 From this time forth 'tis in your power to rise
 From slaves (for such ye were) to men. I ask

Alone to die for you ; so that I die
The first free man and citizen in Rome.

People. What have we heard ? What majesty,
what force,
Breathe in his words ! . . But we, alas ! are powerless :
Can we confront arm'd and ferocious tyrants ? . . .

Bru. Ye powerless, ye ? What 's it that you say ?
What ? Do ye then so little know yourselves ?
The breast of each already was inflamed
With just and inextinguishable hate
Against the impious Tarquins : now, e'en now,
Ye shall behold before your eyes display'd
The last, most execrable, fatal proof,
Of their flagitious arbitrary power.
To-day to your exalted rage, the rage
Of Collatinus, and my own, shall be
A guide, an impulse, a pervading spirit.
Ye have resolved on liberty ; and ye
Deem yourselves powerless ? And do you esteem
The tyrants arm'd ? What force have they, what
arms ?

The arms, the force of Romans ? Who is there,
The Roman who, that would not sooner die,
Than here, or in the camp, for Rome's oppressors,
Equip himself with arms ?—By my advice,
Lucretius with his daughter's blood aspersed,
Hath to the camp repaired : this very moment
By the brave men besieging hostile Ardea,
Hath he been heard : and certainly
In hearing him, and seeing him, those men
Have turn'd their arms against their guilty tyrants,
Or swift in our defence, abandoning
Their impious banners, hitherward they fly.

The honour of the earliest enterprise
Against the tyrants, citizens, would ye
Consent indeed to yield to other men?

People. Oh, with what just and lofty nardihood
Dost thou inflame our breasts!—What can we fear,
If all have the same will?

Col. Your noble rage,
Your generous indignation, thoroughly
Recall me back to life. Nothing can I
Express . . . to you . . . for tears . . . forbid . . . my ut-
terance . . .

But let my sword be my interpreter;
I first unsheathe it, and to earth I cast,
Irrevocably cast, the useless scabbard.
Oh sword, I swear to plunge thee in my breast,
Or in the breast of kings.—Oh husbands, fathers,
Be ye the first to follow me! . . . But ah!
What spectacle is this? . . .

People. Atrocious sight!
Behold the murder'd lady in the forum . . .

Bru. Yes, Romans, fix, (if ye have power to do it,)
Fix on that immolated form your eyes.
That mute fair form, that horrible generous wound,
That pure and sacred blood, ah! all exclaim,
"To-day resolve on liberty, or ye
Are doom'd to death. Nought else remains."

People. All, all,
Yes, free we all of us will be, or dead.

* In the farther part of the stage the body of Lucretia is introduced, followed by a great multitude.

Br. Then listen now to Brutus.—The same dagger

Which from her dying side he lately drew,
Above that innocent illustrious lady
Brutus now lifts; and to all Rome he swears
That which first on her very dying form
He swore already.—While I wear a sword,
While vital air I breathe, in Rome henceforth
No Tarquin e'er shall put his foot; I swear it:
Nor the abominable name of king,
Nor the authority, shall any man
Ever again possess.—May the just Gods
Annihilate him here, if Brutus is not
Lofty and true of heart!—Further I swear,
Many as are th' inhabitants of Rome,
To make them equal, free, and citizens;
Myself a citizen, and nothing more:
The laws alone shall have authority,
And I will be the first to yield them homage.

People. The laws, the laws alone: we with one voice

To thine our oaths unite. And be a fate,
Worse than the fate of Collatinus, ours,
If we are ever perjured!

Br. These, these are
True Roman accents. Tyranny and tyrants,
At your accordant hearty will alone,
All, all have vanish'd. Nothing now is needful
Except 'gainst them to close the city gates;
Since fate to us propitious had already
Sequester'd them from Rome.

People. But you meanwhile
Will be to us at once consuls and fathers;

You to us wisdom, we our arms to you,
Our swords, our hearts, will lend . . .

Bru. In your august
And sacred presence, on each lofty cause,
We always will deliberate. there cannot
From the collected people's majesty
Be any thing conceal'd. But it is just
That the patricians and the senate bear
A part in every thing. At the new tidings
They are not all assembled here : enough
(Alas ! too much so) th' iron rod of power
Has smitten them with terror : now yourselves
To the sublime contention of great deeds
Shall summon them. Here then we will unite,
Patricians and plebeians ; and by us
Freedom a stable basis shall receive.

People. From this day forth we shall begin to live.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Brutus, Titus.

Tit. All the patricians were invited, father,
As thou commandedst, to th' august assembly.
The fourth hour now approaches ; thou wilt have
The whole of Rome subservient to thy nod.
It almost doth bereave me of my reason
To see thee lord of Rome.

Bru. Thou seest me
Lord of myself, and not of Rome, oh Titus :
Nor shall you have a lord in any shape
In Rome henceforward. This by her I swear ;

I, who till now was a vile slave. Oh sons,
 Ye saw me such, while with the tyrant's children
 I educated you for servitude
 In a corrupted court. Alas ! I could not
 Sow in your hearts the seeds of liberty,
 A trembling and degraded father : hence
 Ye are a cause, ye the most special cause,
 Whence I should triumph in recover'd freedom.
 My independent animating carriage
 Will instigate you more to excellence,
 Than my anterior servitude to baseness.
 Contented for my country shall I die,
 When I with confidence shall leave my sons
 The associates of free-born citizens.

Tit. Father, there needed to thy lofty heart,
 Whose lustre always broke upon thy sons,
 A field no less magnificent for action
 Than that which fortune opens to thee now.
 Ah, might we in the noble enterprize
 Assist thee ! But the obstacles are many,
 And they are terrible. The multitude
 Is in itself inconstant : to the Tarquins
 What manifold resources yet remain ! . . .

Bru. Were there no obstacle remaining yet,
 The enterprize were dangerless, and thence
 Unworthy Brutus : but if Brutus fear'd them,
 He were unworthy to accomplish it.—
 To the immutable, lofty, austere,
 Peremptory decision of thy father,
 Do thou thy youthful vehemance unite ;
 Thus at once son of Brutus and of Rome
 Shalt thou be, Titus.—But thy brother comes . . .
 Hear we what news he brings.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Tiberius, Titus, Brutus.

Tib. Beloved father,
Never could I hate met thee in the forum
More opportunely. Wild with joy thou seer' me :
I sought for thee. Breathless from too much haste
I am : with impulses ne'er felt before,
I am at once transported and oppress'd.
I have just seen the execrable Tarquins,
And trembled not . . .

Tit. Where was it?

Bru. Where? . . .

Tib. I am

By my own eyes persuaded that the tyrant
Is of all men the least. The haughty king,
With impious Sextius, scarce had heard that Rome
Had risen in tumult, ere he left the camp ;
And with a chosen escort towards the city
Fled with full speed : and here were they arrived
At the Carmental gate . . .

Tit. Precisely there
Where thou wert sentinel.

Tib. Blest that I am !

I first against the tyrants, I the first
My sword unsheathed.—The iron gate was closed,
And fortified : in its defence myself,
With twenty other armed Romans, paced,
Accoutred all, exterior to the gate,
With circumambient vigilance. Behold,
With cries, with howlings, and with menaces,
The troop, twice ours in number, rush'd towards us.

To hear, to see, to recognize the miscreants,
 To fall upon them with our weapons, seem'd
 The labour of an instant. In ourselves
 There was a strength and rage unlike to theirs :
 Tyrants, they thought that they were meeting slaves :
 But soon they learn'd that liberty and death,
 Like twin-born instincts, hover'd round our swords.
 Already ten or more had we destroy'd ;
 The residue, and Tarquin first of these,
 Betook themselves to flight. Upon their heels
 Fiercely and long we press'd, but press'd in vain ;
 Fear gave them wings. I afterwards return'd
 To my appointed post beside the gate ;
 And, warm yet with the victory, swift I come
 To thee to tell it.

Bru. Trifling though it be,
 Such sample of our prowess should be deem'd
 An omen of prosperity to Rome.
 Fain would I in that fray have borne a part ;
 For nothing so intensely do I covet
 As to confront them in the strife of blood.
 Oh ! wherefore in the forum and the camp
 Cannot I tongue, and intellect, and sword,
 All, all at once exert ! But with such sons
 I can with ease be many things at once.

Tib. Still have I more to tell thee. When to flight
 I had these miscreants driven, as I return'd
 Towards the walls, the sound of steeds I heard
 Behind, advancing on our homeward path ;
 Backward I look'd, and lo ! there came towards us
 A single horseman from the tyrant's train.
 His right-hand weaponless he raised ; no sword
 Guarded his side ; an olive-branch he held

In his left-hand ; beckoning to me, he cried :
 I halted : he advanced, the messenger
 Of peace, in supplicating tones he ask'd
 Admission into Rome. I' enunciate
 Conditions and apologies, he comes
 To Brutus and the senate.

Bru. To the people—
 For Brutus is a portion of the people,
 Or he is nothing. And the herald is? . . .

Tib. Mamilius : strict injunctions to my troops
 Without the gates I gave to guard him well.
 I came to know what must be done with him.

Bru. He comes at the right time. This messenger
 Could not have chosen to present himself
 A day more solemn or more opportune.
 Go, to the gate return ; seek him ; with thee
 Quickly conduct him hither. If he dare,
 Here shall he speak to universal Rome :
 And here, an answer not of Rome unworthy
 He will, I hope, receive.

Tib. To him I fly.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Brutus, Titus.

Bru. Meanwhile go thou to meet the senators ;
 See in the forum that they yield to them
 The most conspicuous places. Even now
 The concourse of the multitude increases ;
 And several of the senators I see.
 Go hence ; oh Titus, go without delay.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Brutus, People, Senators, and Patricians, who place themselves successively in the Forum.

Bru. Oh thou supreme discerner of those thoughts
Which lurk most privily in human breasts !
Thou who dost see and dost inflame my heart !
Rome's great protector, everlasting Jove !
Give me, I pray thee, language, sense, and ardour
To the great cause proportion'd . . . Yes, oh Jove,
This wilt thou do, if it be true that thou
Hast chosen me to be the instrument
Of liberty, thy first and genuine blessing.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Brutus, having mounted the Rostrum, Valerius, Titus, People, Senators, Patricians.

Bru. I come, oh fellow-citizens, to make
To you all strict confession of my deeds.
With one consent you have appointed me
And Collatinus to a dignity
Without a precedent in Rome : the lictors,
The fasces, and the hatchets (hitherto
Th' insignia of kings) ye have been pleased
T' annex to our elective annual office.
Yet not for this hath the malignant taint
Of mad ambition crept into my heart ;
With honours, no, (though yours are real ones,)
I'm not transported ; but with liberty,
With love for Rome, and with implacable,
Fierce, and eternal hatred for the Tarquins.

These are my sole pretensions ; and may each
Of you in such a noble strife excel me ;
I have no wish beyond.

People. Thy dignified
And manly aspect, Brutus, thy frank speech,
All, all announce in thee to us the sire
Of Rome and of the Romans.

Bru. Oh my sons,
My genuine sons, (since with the name of father
Ye have been pleased to honour me,) I hope
Shortly to shew you, by no doubtful proofs,
That beyond all things, e'en myself, I love you.—
My colleague arm'd is from the city gone,
With many heroes, to the camp, to meet
And safely to collect those who have left
Justly the standard of our vile oppressors.
People, patricians, knights, and senators,
I all of you assemble in the forum ;
Since the great cause of all I wish to treat
Before you all convened. Now every Roman
Is so inalienably a part of Rome,
That nothing but his own degeneracy
Can from her solemn meetings banish him.—
Noble patricians, ye, the scanty remnant,
Uninjured by th' exterminating sword
Of the despotic king ; and ye, their flower,
Oh senators, ye will not be averse
To mingle with a free and manly people.
Ah no, ye are too lofty. All around,
Far as I cast my eyes, I see all Romans ;
And there are none of them unworthy you,
Since among us there are no longer kings.—
Trembling and insecure, kings hitherto

Our lips have seal'd : nor was there left for us
 Any alternative, except to load
 Ourselves with infamy, giving assent
 To their iniquitous flagitious laws ;
 Or, if the courage rose in us, to oppose
 Ourselves to them in vain, to be the first
 To fall the luckless victims of their rage.

Va. Brutus, thy words are true.—I, in the name
 Of all the senators, appeal to Rome.
 Too true indeed are they.—We a long time
 On Rome's obscurest citizens reduced
 To look with envy ; more than any culprit
 Forced to despise ourselves ; what need more words ?
 Besides our portion in the common load
 Of execrable servitude, oompell'd
 In the dark mysteries of tyranny
 To take a part, we, yes, we sunk ourselves
 Below the lowest people ; and we were so.
 Nor to the multitude should one of us
 Hope to seem guiltless, save the many slain
 By th' impious royal axe. Nought else remains
 To us to-day, then, but to reunite
 Our heartiest efforts with the noble people's ;
 Nor otherwise to covet to surpass them,
 Except in hate to kings. This sacred hate
 Will be th' eternal, sublime base of Rome.
 We then, yes, we, by the infernal gods,
 By our own blood, and by our children's blood,
 Swear it ferociously with one accord.

People. Oh noble ! oh magnanimous ! Oh ye
 Alone now worthy to surpass us ! We
 Gladly accept the noble strife of virtue.
 What people now will undertake to cope,

Much less the vanquish'd execrable kings,
 (Already vanquish'd by their turpitude,)
 With us, at once Romans and citizens?

Bru. Immortal contest! superhuman words! . . .
 I die contented: I for once at least
 Have utter'd accents worthy of a Roman;
 And have indeed with these my ears once heard
 True Roman eloquence. Now since Rome trusts
 Herself to us wholly for her defence,
 Without her walls I instantly depart;
 And to you day by day of all our schemes
 My colleague or myself will give account;
 Until, our arms laid down, in perfect peace
 Ye give a stable government to Rome.

People. 'Tis needful first wholly to disconcert,
 Defeat, and slay the tyrants.

Bru. I, in this,
 And nothing else, will be your chief.—Be pleased
 Briefly to hear a messenger of theirs;
 He, in ~~their~~ name, solicits to address you.
 Would you believe it? Tarquin, and with him
 The impious Sextius, and a few more, dared
 Erewhile to make incursion with full speed
 Almost to Rome; thinking to come to us
 As to a timorous flock, vain-glorious fools!
 But they in this were much deceived; my son
 Tiberius the honour robb'd from me
 Of first attacking them. The miscreants
 Betook themselves from him by sudden flight:
 Descending thence from force to art, they dare
 To send to you as an ambassador
 Mamilius. What may be the unworthy terms
 Will you be pleased to hear?

People. There are 'twixt us
No other terms except their death or ours.

Bru. 'This let him hear then, and report.

People. To us
Now let this servile herald quickly come.
Let him too hear the sentiments of Rome,
And bear them back to him who sent him hither.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

*Brutus, Titus, Tiberius, Mamilius, Valerius, People,
Senator, Patricians.*

Bru. Mamilius, come, advance ; examine well
By whom thou art surrounded. In the court
Of Tarquin thou, effeminately nursed,
Hast never yet seen Rome ; this, this is she,
Behold her undisguised, and patiently
Prepared to hear thy message. Now proceed.

Ma. Oh Brutus, with no unimportant words
Was I commission'd to bespeak thy hearing :
But in this vast assembly, . . . to divulge . . .
Without premeditation . . .

Bru. Audibly
Address thyself to all, and not to me.
Sublime announcer of the will of kings,
Divulge it to the people, to the senate :
Brutus will also hear thee with the rest.

People. Speak, speak to all ; and thou of all shalt
hear,
In a few words, the answer, from the mouth
Of our great consul Brutus. See in him
Our genuine interpreter ; alone
Worthy to be the organ of our thoughts.

Make haste, proceed : and brief be thy harangue :
Frank and explicit shall our answer be.

Bru. Heard'st thou?

Ma. I tremble. Tarquin, king . . .

People. Not king
Of Rome . . .

Ma. —Of Rome, Tarquin the friend and father . .

People. He is the father of the impious Sextius,
And not of us . . .

Bru. Whate'er his words may be,
May ye be pleased to hear him in complete
Dignified silence.

Ma. To yourselves erewhile
Came Tarquin, at the earliest news that Rome
Rebell'd ; almost defenceless and alone,
Fully relying on his innocence,
And on his people's loyalty, he came :
But armed men repell'd him. Hence he sent me,
A messenger of peace ; and by my means
Enquires, what is the crime, whence in your sight
So guilty, that to-day he's doom'd to lose
The throne of Rome, once his by your consent . . .

People. Heard ye? Incredible audacity!
Slain is Lucretia, and he asks his crime?

Ma. That was the guilt of Sextius, not his . . .

Tib. And Sextius also at his father's side
Erewhile repair'd to Rome : and had they not
Both been compell'd to save their lives by flight,
Here had ye seen him now.

People. Ah why did ye
Frustrate their wish to gain access to Rome?
Already had we torn their scatter'd limbs
In thousand thousand pieces.

Ma. It is true,
Sextius was also with his father there :
But Tarquin, more a monarch than a father,
Thither enticed his son, to subject him
To a retributory punishment.

Bru. This is an impudent unmanly lie ;
And robs me utterly of self-control.
If, to preserve his throne, the guilty father
Offer'd to sacrifice his guilty son,
Should we consent to it ? The murder'd lady
Hath brought, 'tis true, our sufferance to a crisis ;
But, without this, is not the haughty father,
The mother, and the whole opprobrious race
Of impure Sextius, stain'd with thousand crimes ?
Servius, that perfect king, and Tullia's father,
Was by the husband of that Tullia slain :
Tullia, detested monster ! mounts the throne,
Trampling beneath her horses feet the corse
Of her slain father : afterwards their reign
By bloodshed and oppression was distinguish'd ;
The senators and citizens destroy'd ;
And those not murder'd cruelly despoil'd ;
Dragg'd from the service of magnanimous war,
(To which alone are Roman heroes born,)
Vilely to hollow and to pile whole quarries,
Which will remain eternal monument
Both of their bondage and of regal pride.
One after t' other, their so many crimes . . .
When, when should I conclude my narrative,
If one by one I should enumerate
The Tarquins' trespasses ? Lucretia's death
Was last of these ; and their impiety,
And our endurance, terminate with this.

People. This is the last ; Rome swears it is the last.

Va. This we all swear : we all will rather die Ere impious Tarquin e'er return to Rome.

Bru. Mamilius, well, thou art confused and mute ; Thou mightest clearly have foreseen the answer. Go then, repeat it to thy lord, since thou To being a man, preferr'st to be a slave.

Ma. I might urge many arguments ; . . but none . .

People. No, no ! there are 'twixt citizens oppress'd And a despotic king no arguments, Save those which hurtle in the field of Mars. Heard he indeed our arguments and prayers When on the throne he sat, puff'd up with pride, And steel'd with cruelty ? Did he not then Laugh at our tears, and scoff at our complaints ?

Ma. Then may another king with milder sway More satisfy your hearts.—My whole discourse I now shall terminate in one request.— Tarquin in Rome has left abundant wealth, Indisputably his ; would it be just That ye, besides his honours, throne, and country, Should rob him of his substance ?

People. — Answer this, Brutus, for us.

Bru. His country is not taken From Tarquin by the Romans : kings have not A country ever ; nor deserve they one : They never were, nor are of Roman blood. They have themselves defrauded of their honour For a long time. Henceforth, by our decree, The monarch and the monarchy from Rome Are banish'd everlastingly ; the throne

Is, by the flames, consumed to noisome dust ;
 Nor is a trace remaining of it now.
 'Tis true in part, that, when they came to Rome,
 Their foreign innovating ancestors
 Infamous treasures brought, which, afterwards
 Insidiously dispersed, at first conduced
 To vitiate our simple ancient customs.
 Their wealth was afterwards the fruit of rapine,
 And was augmented by our sweat and blood ;
 From whence the Romans equitably might
 Resume it for themselves. But Rome esteems
 The Tarquins only worthy to enjoy it,
 And gives it all to them.

People. Oh heart sublime !
 The tutelary genius of Rome
 In Brutus speaks. Be his decree fulfill'd . .
 Let Tarquin have this guilty wealth . . .

Bru. With gold
 May vice and every royal feculence
 Depart.—Go hence, Mamilius, and collect
 Their treasures with all possible dispatch :
 My sons shall be to thee in this thy task,
 Both guardians and assistants. Go ye with him.

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

Brutus, People, Valerius, Senators, Patricians. .

Bru. Methinks, ~~on~~ citizens, 'tis now high time
 The forum to abandon, to repair
 Arm'd to the camp. Let us, let us behold
 If Tarquin dare to challenge, with his sword
 Another answer from us.

People. Brutus, see
Thy chosen followers are all accoutred.
Bru. Let us then go to victory or death.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Tiberius, Mamilius.

Tib. Mamilius, come, I must obey my father :
This moment hath he sent to me a message,
Which peremptorily insists on this :
Thou with the setting sun must go from hence.

Ma. Oh ! how can he presume to abrogate
That which himself with universal Rome
Granted to me this morning ? . . .

Tib. He alone
Forbids thy longer tarriance here : ere long
The hoarded wealth, solicited and granted,
Shall from the gates pursue thee.—Let us go . . .

Ma. Say, in what manner am I authorized
To greet unhappy Aruns in thy name ?

Tib. Tell him, . . . that he alone deserveth not
To be by birth a Tarquin ; and that I,
Still mindful of our friendship, feel no small
Compassion for his fate.—For him I can
Do nothing . . .

Ma. For thyself, thou canst do much.

Tib. What dost thou mean ?

Ma. That if compassion yet
Find an admission in thy youthful breast,
Thou for thyself and for thy friends should'st feel it.

Tib. What sayest thou ?

Ma. That Aruns' pity, (and soon,)
More than thine him, may benefit thyself.
Dangers and obstacles thou seest not,
Intoxicate with freedom: but canst thou
Think that they ever can be permanent,
These innovating, undigested plans,
These mere chimeras of a government?

Tib. I easily believe, since thou'rt a slave,
That freedom seems impossible to thee:
But the unanimous consent of Rome...

Ma. Th' authentic wishes of another Rome
Have I since heard: thou dost excite my pity;
Thou who with thy infatuated father
Dost rush towards the fatal precipice.—
But Titus comes to join us.—Ah! perchance,
Thy brother may himself expose to thee,
Better than me, the dubious state of things.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Titus, Mamilius, Tiberius.*

Tit. I ran in quest of thee; fain would I speak.

Tib. I cannot hear thee now.

Ma. Immediately
He ought to drag me forth from Rome: to this
His father's absolute command compels him.—
How much I pity you, oh youths!..

Tib. Meanwhile
Let us depart.—I presently return
To listen to thee, Titus.

Tit. And this man,
What would he say?

Ma. Let us depart: perchance

I may, as we proceed, communicate
That which thy brother now would tell thee.

Tit. Stop.

To learn from thee . . .

Ma. More than thou know'st I'll tell thee.
It all depends on me : I can, I only,
Deliver you from mighty perils . . .

Tib. Thou

Artfully speak'st . . .

Tit. And what depends on thee ?

Ma. Tiberius, and Titus, and your Brutus,
And Collatinus, and e'en Rome herself.

Tib. Vain-glorious fool ! what sayest thou ?

Tit. I know

The guilty hope . . .

Ma. Hope ! it is certainty.

Already a confederacy is form'd
In favour of the Tarquins, and complete :
Nor are the Aquilii the sole confederates,
As thou dost think, oh Titus : with these are
Th' Octavii, the Marcii, and others ;
Hundreds and hundreds of patrician rank ;
And many more, consummately esteem'd
Among the very people . . .

Tib. What do I hear ? . . .

Tit. 'Tis true, too true in part : there is in Rome
A spirit of sedition. Numbers met
In solemn conference where th' Aquilii dwell :
As friend and relative, I sought their dwelling,
And from th' assembly was alone excluded.
A strong suspicion thence arose in me . . .

Ma. I was in conference with th' Aquilii,
While thou wert thus excluded : finally.

So strong, so certain, and so well assured
Is the confederacy, that I fear not
To reveal it to you.

Tib. Perfidious . . .

Tit. There

Hast thou employ'd thy abject arts . . .

• *Ma.* Hear, hear,
Ye sons of Brutus, that which I would say.—
Had it been my contrivance thus to form,
So quickly such a formidable plot,
I had not been on this account perfidious.
For the most just and sanctimonious cause
Of a legitimate king had I attempted
To turn to equity and penitence
His subjects, to their several duties blind,
Seduced from truth; nor would this too have been
Perfidious. But I neither ought, nor will,
Take to myself the honour of a deed
Which neither cost me labour or design.
Scarce was the popular conventicle
Dissolved, ere I clandestinely received
An invitation to a secret council.
Here with amazement was I overwhelm'd,
Such and so many, and such ardent friends
Of the expell'd, calumniated Tarquins
To see united: emulously all
They promised me far more than I from them
Had ventured to demand. They all agreed
For Sextius alone to stipulate
The punishment he merited. And Sextius
Is culpable; and, e'en more than Rome can be,
His father is incens'd 'gainst him; and swears
On him an entire vengeance. I made known

To them this resolution of the king :
 Then all with one voice cried, " We will lay down
 Our lives to reinstate him in the throne."
 This of the noblest and best part of Rome,
 This was the cry.—Now ye, see ye not clearly,
 From this account, that artifice is not
 Embosom'd in me ; I reveal the whole
 To save you, and to save at the same time,
 If he consent to it, your sire himself.

Tib. Since thou already know'st so much, I deem
 That it were best, till Brutus's return,
 To urge thy stay in Rome. I now perceive
 Why Brutus sent so expeditiously
 The order to expel thee ; but, alas !
 It came to me too late . . .

Tit. Thou thinkest justly :
 Meanwhile do thou watch over him with care.
 The most secure asylum in the which
 To place Mamilius, appears to me
 The house of the Vitellii, our cousins.
 I to the camp shall fly, to expedite
 My sire's return from thence.

Ma. Since I esteem'd
 Your natures courteous, I have spoken frankly.
 Will it now please ye to betray me ? Do it ;
 Further if it please Brutus to infringe
 The sacred rights of hospitality,
 Let him, in my case, do it ; but already
 So far have matters gone, that benefit,
 In consequence of aught that I may suffer,
~~Cannot~~ accrue to Brutus or yourselves.
 Already far beyond what ye suspect
 Is the confederacy advanced. E'en now

Your father and his colleagues, and the dregs
Of the vile populace alone remain
The nerve and sinew of rebellion's cause.
Go to thy father, Titus, if thou wilt :
The more thou dost accelerate his return,
So much the more dost thou accelerate
His evil destiny.—Deposit me
With the Vitellii quickly ; I shall be
Far safer in their custody than thou.

Tib. What vile suspicion would'st thou thus? . . .

Ma. I speak

Not from suspicion, but from certainty.
E'en the Vitellii, the four faithful brothers
Of Brutus' consort, of your mother, they,
As much by amity to Brutus bound
As by the ties of blood, e'en they desire
To reinstate Tarquinius on the throne.

Tit. Oh heaven! . . .

Tib. This is a lie . . .

Ma. This scroll, in which,
Sign'd by themselves, the most illustrious names
Of the confederates are at length inscribed,
Will, without doubt, convince you.—Look at it :
Beneath the Aquilii's names, now, one by one,
Read there, their four names written.

Tib. Dreadful sight!

Tit. Oh heaven! what will become then of my
father? . . .

Tib. Oh day of sorrow! Oh devoted Rome!

Ma. Nor fondly dream ye, since this scroll I hear,
That the success of the confederacy
On my departure hangs. Clad destinely
Already is, a faithful messenger

Of mine from Rome departed ; and to Tarquin
Already is the project fully known
Th' Etrurians to his standard flock in numbers ;
The powerful king of Cutia takes his part ;
Tarquinia, Veia, lastly all Etruria,
All Rome, except the consuls and yourselves.
This scroll is written with no other purpose,
Than to obtain the clemency of Tarquin
In favour of the names therein inscribed.
Surrender me, and with myself this scroll,
Into your father's hands ; and ye perchance
May for awhile cause your relations' blood
To flow in rivers ; but, or soon or late,
Your father ye condemn to certain death ;
For, do ye what ye may, Tarquin will be,
Ere long, inevitably king in Rome.

Tit. Ah ! I too clearly did anticipate
What now I hear. I said it to my father . . .

Tib. Alas ! we are driven to a perilous straight !
What should we do ? Ah ! speak . . .

Tit. Peril immense
Threatens our father . . .

Tib. And still greater Rome . . .

Ma. Wherefore this secret conference prolong ?
I am prepared for all, whether ye chuse
To drag me forth from Rome, or, bound with chains,
To keep me there a captive : but if love,
True love for Rome, your father, and yourselves,
Dwell in your bosom, ye at once will save
Yourselves, your father, and your native Rome.
All this is in your power.

Tit. How ? . . .

Tib. What hop'st thou ?

Ma. Add but your names with your own hand to these,
And all will then be safe.

Tib. Oh heaven! shall we
Our father and our country thus betray? . . .

Ma. Your honour and your tutelary Gods,
Your father and your country ye betray'd,
Then when ye dared 'gainst your legitimate king
Rebelligiously to rise. Yet had your fate
Granted a happy issue to your scheme,
Ye had, at least, some recompense obtain'd
For this your treachery: but since ye see
That prospect vanish'd, (I again repeat it,)
With further perseverance you will drag,
And vainly drag, to dire calamity
Your country, and your father, and yourselves.

Tit. But, tell me, what would be our gain, should we
Annex our names to those already written?
To what do these subscribers pledge themselves?

Ma. To things most just. First, from the king's
own lips
To hear his own defence; to make yourselves,
The king being present, judges of the late
And horrible misdemeanour of his son;
To see him punish'd; to regenerate
And reinstate, in splendour and in peace,
Beneath the sway of less despotic laws,
Your agitated country . . . Doing this,
Ah! ye will hear yourselves beyond all others
Hail'd as the true deliverers of the state;
Provided that 'twixt Brutus and Tarquinius
Ye be the instruments of lasting friendship;

The only means now to place Rome in safety.

Tit. Assuredly we might do this . . .

Tib. Reflect . . .

Who knows? . . . Perhaps other means . . .

Tit. What other means

Remain for us now? The confederacy

Too powerful is . . .

Tib. I'm younger than thyself;

In so important a concern I will not,

Nor can I, part myself from thee: too much

I've always loved thee; but I feel at heart

A horrible presage . . .

Tit. But the night approaches,

Yet neither Collatinus nor my father

Do I behold with their arm'd men return

To Rome: his messenger already is

To Tarquin gone; we are on all sides press'd;

At least it now behoves us for the present

To appease the king . . .

Ma. The hour is late; resolve:

'Tis vain this whispering apart from me.

Whether for my advantage ye decide

T' exert yourselves, or (with more truth) for yours,

The swiftest now will be the best decision.

Resolve; behold the scroll. Rich with your names,

Ye'll make me speedily depart from Rome,

That peace to Rome may speedily return.

Tit. Heaven I attest; it seeth my pure heart;

It knows that nothing but the good of others

To this compels me . . .

Tib. Heaven! what art thou doing? . . .

Tit. Behold my name.

Tib. —And be it, if thou wilt.—

Behold my own name, oh Mamilius, sign'd.

Ma. I go contented.

Tit. Do thou then conduct him;
While I . . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Lictors, Collatinus with a number of Soldiers, Titus, Mamilius, Tiberius.

Col. What do I see? Mamilius yet
In Rome?

Tib. Oh heaven! . . .

Tit. Oh inauspicious meeting!

Col. And ye, have ye thus kept the absolute
And peremptory order of your father?

But wherefore are ye agitated thus?

Wherefore thus mute?—Ah, heaven be praised!
perchance

I yet arrive in time.—Lictors, advance;

Be Titus and Tiberius instantly

In fetters bound . . .

Tit. Ah, hear us! . . .

Col. Rome, ere long,
Shall hear you, and the consul Brutus. Drag
To their paternal dwelling the two brothers;
And watch them there.

Tib. Ah Titus!

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Collatinus, Mamilius, Soldiers.

Col. (To the Soldiers.) And do you
Escort Mamilius through the gates . . .

Ma. I came
Under the public faith.

Col. Inviolatè,
Under the public faith, which thou deservest not,
Thou shalt depart from hence.—Thou hearest, Quin-
tus.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Collatinus.

Merciful heaven! when shall it have an end,
This quick succession of calamities? . . .
But I'm compell'd meanwhile, till Brutus come,
To watch o'er all things with an iron heart.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Lictors, Brutus, Soldiers.

Bru. Heroic Romans! we have combated
Enough to-day for Rome. Let every man,
For the remaining hours of the half-spent night,
To his own family repair in peace.
Should the foe once more have the hardihood
To turn their faces to the gates of Rome,
We to disperse them will again unite.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Collatinus, Brutus, Lictors, Soldiers.

Col. Oh Brutus, opportunely thou returnest.
Already, anxious at thy non-appearance,
I quitted Rome to accelerate our meeting.

Bru. I return late, but full of hope and joy.
 I found it difficult within the walls
 My heroes to collect ; they closely press'd
 A royal company in fierce attack,
 Which, at first sight, made some display of valour.
 In Tarquin's track from Ardea they came ;
 Nor did they know that he had been driven back :
 Perhaps in his flight, by chance or by design,
 He varied from his former course. This troop
 We opportunely met ; they were already
 Broken and scatter'd all, in numbers slain,
 And the rest routed, ere the sun declined.
 I scarcely afterwards restrain'd my men
 Further, when night fell, from pursuing them.

Col. I also in my sally from the walls
 Met with no mean success. I first, thou knowest,
 Through th' other gate descended to the plain :
 Troop after troop, it was my fate to meet
 Our home-returning and disbanded army,
 Almost to the last man ; they had in Ardea
 Seceded from the standard of the tyrant.
 Oh ! what exulting and unbounded cries
 Of purest transport did the citizens
 And soldiers raise to heaven, when thus they met ! . .
 By me conducted, in the walls of Rome
 Are they assembled now ; and there they watch
 With emulous vigilance in her defence.

Bru. Treacherous Mamilius certainly was banish'd
 As I my sons commanded ? Let us all
 Then go to brief repose ; we have, methinks,
 Well purchased the indulgence. In the forum
 To-morrow's dawn shall see us ; for we ought
 There, with the people, to confer at length

On things of loftiest consequence.

Col. —Oh Brutus! . . .

Yet stay a little while.—Command thy troops,
Yet keeping under arms, to draw aside :
I ought to speak with thee in private here.

Bru. Ah, wherefore? . . .

Col. The interests of Rome require it ;
I pray thee grant me this . . .

Bru. In double troop,
At the entrance of the forum, wait for me,
Oh soldiers.—Lictors, draw aside a little.

Col. —Ah Brutus! . . . Thou wilt vainly, vainly
seek,
Amid thy Lares, in this horrible night,
Even a transient rest.

Bru. What would'st thou tell me? . . .

Whence art thou troubled, anxious, trembling thus?

Col. Yes, I indeed tremble for Brutus, Rome,
And all of us.—This morning thou, oh Brutus,
Didst, with compassionate hand, to my profound
And recent wound a “flattering unction” lay
Of vengeance and of hope : and I, alas!

Am forced to give thee, as a recompence,
To give thee in thy heart a wound more fatal.

Why hav' I lived till now? . . . Oh desolate,
Distracted father ! Thou art now compell'd,
From a disconsolate and widow'd husband
Tidings to hear, which in thy heart will fix
A mortal wound ! . . . Yet neither can I hide them,
Nor yet to thee delay their utterance.

Bru. Alas ! . . . I shudder at thy words . . . But yet
Worse than the evil is its expectation.
Speak. I that hitherto in servitude

Have dragg'd a painful life, have long been used
 To tremble always for my dearest treasures.
 Private calamities, whate'er they be,
 So that the liberties of Rome be safe,
 I can endure to hear : speak.

Col. On thyself,
 (But too emphatically,) on thyself
 The liberties of Rome are now dependent ;
 But at a price so vast that I almost . . .
 Oh dreadful day ! . . . I was the first that gave
 Occasion for the lofty enterprize,
 By a hard sacrifice ; but to conclude it . . .
 Oh heaven ! . . . 'tis indispensable that Brutus
 Prepare to manifest to assembled Rome
 A cruel, fierce, unparallel'd example
 Of desperate fortitude.—Amid thy Lares,
 (Would'st thou believe it ?) thou liv'st not in safety.
 A powerful, numerous, fierce conspiracy
 In Rome now rages.

Bru. I suspected it,
 In hearing of the strenuous cabals
 Of insincere Mamilius ; and in haste
 I expedited to Tiberius hence
 An express order, ere the hour of three,
 T' expel him from the city.

Col. When the sun
 Was sinking in the barriers of the west,
 I found Mamilius still had linger'd here
 With both thy sons.—It grieves me to repeat it ;
 But it is too true ; thou wert ill obey'd.

Bru. Oh what a conflict dost thou raise in me
 Of fear and indignation ! . . .

Col. Wretched Brutus ! . . .

What wilt thou feel when the conspiracy
To thee I publish? . . . and when thou shalt hear
The names of the conspirators? . . . Then, first,
Among a number of thy nearest friends
And relatives, first the Vitellii are
A part and instigators of the plot . . .

Bru. Alas! the brothers of my wife!

Col. Who knows

If also she be not seduced by them?
And, . . . then . . . thy sons . . . themselves! . . .

Bru. What do I hear? . . .

Oh heaven! my blood freezes in every vein! . . .
My sons conspirators! . . . It cannot be! . . .

Col. Oh Brutus . . . that it were not so!—And I,
At first, would not believe it: afterwards
My eyes compell'd me to implicit faith.—
This is a paper fatal to our peace:
Read it.

Bru. . . . My tremulous heart is chill'd with fear.
What do I here behold? . . . Name after name,
With their own hand inscribed; the Aquilii first,
Then the Vitellii, and the Martii;
And others after others; . . . and, at last, . . .
Titus, Tiberius! . . . Ah! this is enough . . .
No more; . . . I've seen too much.—Unhappy Brutus!
'Thou art no more a father . . . —But, thou'rt yet
Consul, no less than citizen of Rome.—
Titus, ho, Titus, and Tiberius, quick,
Let them be brought before me.

Col. Ah! oh Brutus,
It had been better hadst thou suffer'd me
To die alone . . .

Bru. How fell into thy hands

This terrible paper ?

Col. I myself beheld it,
Though swiftly he conceal'd it, in the hands
Of the infamous Mamilius I beheld it ;
Thence I, in his expulsion from the city,
Constrain'd him to surrender it. Meanwhile,
In thy own dwelling, to a faithful guard,
Thy sons had I committed; in an instant
'Gainst every accident I had provided.
And now, I hope, that all these machinations
Will be completely baffled. Luckily
I was informed of them in time; and Jove,
In his compassion, certainly ordain'd
That such a horrible mystery to me,
Me, not a father, should be first divulged.
I tell this to thee trembling and with tears.
But yet 'tis fit that I reveal it to thee
Ere to thy dwelling thou . . .

Bru. No other dwelling
Except the forum and the tomb, remains
For wretched Brutus.—'Tis my duty now
To give, ere death to Brutus, life to Rome.

Col. My heart thou rendest. Thy excessive grief
Makes me almost insensible to mine . . .

But, who can tell? . . . Perchance thy sons, e'en yet,
May exculpate themselves . . . Hear them thyself . . .
I have not yet of this conspiracy
Spoken to any one except thyself:

I will adopt the most effectual measures
That no man, during this approaching night,
Shall even quit his dwelling: all the people
I have by day-break summon'd to the forum.

Bru. And all the people by to-morrow's dawn.

The real truth, whate'er that truth may be,
Shall from my lips receive.

Col. I hear, methinks,
The steps of the unhappy youths . . .

Bru. My sons! . . .
Such I this morning deem'd them; foes to me
They're now become, and traitors to their country . .

SCENE THE THIRD.

Titus, Tiberius, among Lictors, Brutus, Collatinus.

Bru. Let every man retire: do ye alone
Advance.

Tit. Ah father! . . .

Bru. I of Rome am consul.—
I ask of you if ye are citizens
Of Rome.

Tib. We are; and sons of Brutus yet . . .

Tit. And we will prove it, if the consul deign
To hear us.

Col. At their gestures, at their words,
I feel my heart transpierced.

Bru. —This is a scroll,
Which the perfidious Mamilius bore
To the proscribed Tarquinius. In that paper,
With many other names, are yours inscribed.
Ye to your country then are traitors; now
No more the sons of Brutus, but the sons
Of infamous expatriated tyrants.

Tit. 'Tis true, (too true,) that I first added there
'Neath many other noble names, my name,
And his my brother afterwards inscribed,
By my example urged. He is not guilty:

Be it whate'er it may, the penalty
To me alone is due. He evermore
Dissuaded me . . .

Tib. Yet I, perplex'd, confounded,
Knew not what other council to propose :
And it seem'd indispensable to us
To save, at all events, our sire betray'd.
Mamilius had so artfully perplex'd
Falsehood and truth, that we, caught by his arts,
Deeming our father by all men abandon'd,
Were inadvertently ourselves constrain'd
Thus to betray him, by our too great love.
Ah ! if we're criminal, alike have we
Incurr'd the punishment annex'd to guilt :
But the sole punishment we apprehend,
The sole insufferable punishment,
(Paternal hatred,) we call heaven to witness,
And swear that neither of us merit this.

Bru. Oh infamy ! and have ye promised then
To reinstate, with these confederate traitors,
The banish'd tyrant ?

Tib. By my signature
I hoped I' appease that tyrant towards my father . . .

Bru. To Brutus ! Tarquin be appeased towards
Brutus !—

And even were it thus, perfidious youth !
Should'st thou betray thy country e'en for me ?
Did ye not both erewhile, both swear with me,
Rather to die than ever to submit,
Let him be who he may, to any king ?

Tib. This I deny not, no . . .

Bru. Then ye are both
Perjured and traitors ! . . . In this paper ye

Have sign'd at once your own death . . . and your
father's ! . . .

Tib. Thou weep'st, father ! . . . If paternal tears,
Moistening the stern eyes of the rigid judge,
Attest at least that altogether we
Are not unworthy of thy tenderness,
We die exulting for the sake of Rome.

Tit. But, though mistaken, Titus neither was
Or vile or criminal . . .

Bru. Oh sons ! oh sons ! . . .

—Why do I call ye sons ? Ye are my first,
Ye are my sole dishonour. At the expense
Both of his glory and his liberty,
Ye, ye would purchase for your wretched father
A despicable life ! Ye would reduce me
To pine with you in double slavery,
Then when 'twas in your power to go with
Free and unshackled, to a generous death !
And to achieve an enterprize so base,
Ye became traitors to your nascent country !
To honour deaf, and perjured to the Gods !—
And let me grant that I had been to-day
Deserted and betray'd by every Roman ;
That, following your example, I had stoop'd
The pity of the tyrant to implore ;
Ah fools ! yet more, far more than guilty fools !
Could you e'er think that the ferocious heart
Of an expell'd, exasperated tyrant,
Could aught imbibe except a raging thirst
For bloodshed and revenge ? To certain death,
To an opprobrious and lingering death,
Did ye, to save him, now reserve your father !

Tit. Fear, I confess, in reading in that scroll

So many, and so many potent names,
My breast invaded, and made me esteem
The lofty enterprize impossible.
Already, as thou knowest, (although my heart
Wish'd its success,) I thought it difficult,
And in itself both perilous and doubtful :
Hence, when I saw the aspect of events
In such a short space absolutely change ; —
Saw to the king the citizens return,
And those the most illustrious, in a crowd :
I fear'd for Rome, where much blood, and in vain,
And first of all thy blood, was doom'd to run.
A hope sprung in my heart, that, if our names
Were added to the names already written,
Thus, by our means, our father might at least
Be rescued from the vengeance of the king :
And this to us Mamilius craftily
Promised in many words.

Br. What hast thou done ?

What hast thou done ? Oh heaven ! Ah, at that time
Thou wert a citizen of Rome no longer ;
Since thou for me betray'dst Rome . . . Nor then
Wert thou a son of Brutus, since his honour
Thou soldest at the price of servitude.

Tib. Ah father, do not wreak on him alone
Thy just disdain ; I equally deserve it.
I also fear'd for thee, I must confess it ;
We loved our father better than our country :
Yes, father, this alone was our offence.

Col. Ah wretched youths ! . . Ah wretched father !

Br. Yes,
Ye were indeed more than the sons of Rome,
The sons of Brutus ! Brought up as ye were

In abject slavery, I indeed 'constrain'd
 From the complexion of the times to cheat you;
 With lofty and invigorating thoughts
 I could not foster you as it behoved
 A citizen and parent . . . Oh my sons,
 I for your error seek no other cause.
 Myself, myself alone I blame for this,
 My silence and my pristine servitude;
 And, though assumed, my very fear itself,
 Which taught you also to be apprehensive.
 Ah! pity in my bosom is not mute; . . .
 But, in a more authoritative voice,
 Tremendous justice to my conscience cries;
 And Rome now rightfully lays claim to it.—
 My sons, beloved sons, I am, alas!
 More wretched far than you . . . Ah why, oh heaven!
 Since in your free arbitrement it lay
 Rome to betray, or doom your sire to death,
 Wherefore did ye forget that to avert
 From Brutus infamy (his only death)
 A sword was all sufficient? And he had one;
 This his sons knew; and how, when they knew this,
 Could they one moment tremble for their father?

Col. Ah! for awhile, oh Brutus, somewhat calm
 Thy grief and indignation; yet who knows . . .
 To save them perhaps . . .

Tit. Ah! ye would wish in vain
 To save me now: I could no longer live!
 I've lost my sire's esteem, perhaps his love . . .
 No, 'tis not possible for me to live.
 But let my sad example exculpate
 My innocent, younger brother, save him, father . . .

Tib. Immense, oh father, is our guilt. But we

ACT THE FOURTH.

Alike are guilty; and thou wert not just,
If thou on us an equal punishment
Inflictest not. Perchance expressly now
The tutelary genius of Rome
Decrees to liberty a lasting basis'
In our severe example.

Bru. On my sons! . . .

Ah! let this now suffice. Your excellent,
Sublime, immortalizing penitence
Tears as by piecemeal my distracted heart . . .
Alas! e'en yet I am, e'en yet a father
More than a consul . . . Through my every vein
I feel a horrid chillness creep . . . Ah all,
Yes, all my blood will, for my country's sake,
Ere long be shed . . . To re-establish Rome
The last blood indispensable is mine:
Provided that I enfranchise my country,
I swear, oh sons, that I will not one day
Survive your loss.—Let me for the last time,
Beloved children, clasp you to my breast; . . .
Yet I can do it . . . Tears, alas! forbid . . .
My further utterance . . . Much-loved sons, farewell.
Consul of Rome, to thee do I restore
The fatal tablet. An imperious duty
Wills, that to-morrow, without subterfuge,
It be presented to assembled Rome.
Meanwhile the guilty to thy custody
Are all committed. I will also come,
At early dawn, to meet thee in the forum.
I cannot longer now endure the presence
Of such an agonizing spectacle.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Collatinus, Titus, Tiberius, Lictors.

Col. Fatal necessity !

Tit. Unhappy father !

Tib. Provided Rome be saved . . .

Col. All follow me.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

*People, Valerius, Senators, Patricians, all seated.
Collatinus and Brutus in the Rostrum.*

Col. Romans, to you the sun of yesterday
Triumphantly and joyfully arose ;
When, at this hour exactly, from yourselves
The earliest cries of liberty resounded
Through the wide air : I, in my grief absorb'd,
Meanwhile stood mute. But on this horrible day
A part quite different, alas ! on me
Devolves by lot, since, with the noble Brutus,
Ye have been pleas'd t' elect me for your consul.—
All swore, (I hope ye recollect it well,)
All of ye, in the forum, yesterday,
Swore to the gods, that, sooner than return
To the vile yoke of monarchs, ye would die.
And not alone the execrable Tarquins,
But every man that dared to make himself
Superior to the laws, by this your oath
Expressly was proscribed — Would ye believe it ?
I, in your presence, I am now constrain'd,
Among the most powerful noble citizens,

To impeach many, infamous and perjured,
 Who have, 'gainst Rome and 'gainst themselves,
 (too much so!)
 Been plotting for the Tarquins.

People. For the Tarquins!

Who are they? Who are the flagitious traitors,
 Unworthy to be Romans? Quickly, name them;
 • We will, they all be slain &c.

Col. Ah! . . . who can tell . . .

Perhaps . . . when ye hear the names? . . . When I attempt

To utter them, I tremble . . . And far more
 Shall I implore from you your clemency
 Than your stern justice. Almost all of these
 Are youths: they have not, from their unripe age,
 Yet felt the ill, so countless and so bitter,
 Of civil servitude: the greater part,
 Enervated by indolence, brought up
 In a corrupted court's pestiferous shade,
 Have only tasted tyranny's sweet bait,
 Yet unacquainted with the lurking poison.

People. Whoe'er they be indeed, they're traitors,
 perjured;

Compassion they deserve not; let them perish:
 The corrupt, putrid, vitiating members
 Of a new city, liberty decrees
 That they be first lopp'd off.—Pronounce their names.

Va. And we, although too thoroughly convinced
 That this disgrace (their permanent dishonour)
 To the patrician tribe belongs, yet now
 We with the people emulously seek
 To know the culprits' names—Oh noble people!
 For high achievements born! Oh happy ye!

Ye only did sustain the tyrant's yoke ;
 But to the coveted impediment
 Of fetters well deserved, in us were join'd,
 Debased patricians ! their disgrace and sname.
 We, nearer to the tyrant, more enslaved,
 And less regretting slavery than you ;
 We thence assuredly more worthy slavery :
 I feel the passage ; yes, we, we have been
 The first in perjury.—Oh Collatinus,
 I ask it of thee, whosoc'er they be,
 Divulge the criminals. What terrible,
 What inextinguishable thirst of honour
 Pervades her citizens, Rome should to-day
 Acknowledge from a memorable proof.

People. Oh worthy ye of better fate ! . . May heaven
 Grant, that the few to servitude seduced,
 Either plebeian or patrician names
 No longer bear ! The trait'rous and the perjured
 Cease to be Romans.

Col. Many are the guilty ;
 But different their degrees of guilt There are
 Among them those who servitude abhor,
 And who have elevated courteous hearts ;
 But in a thousand ways assail'd, entrapp'd,
 By base Mamilius . . .

People. Where is the impostor ?
 Oh rage ! where is he ? . . .

Col. Ere the night was closed,
 From Rome I banish'd him ; the sacred rights
 Of hospitality required his safety,
 Though he were culpable. Religiously
 The citizens of Rome each right observe :

Faith is the basis of our sacred freedom.

People. In truth thou hast done well from our first
rage

To wrest him : justice thus is not by us
Attained. We shall have, in fair array,
The gods themselves and virtue with us listed :
But round the banners of the heart-struck tyrants
Treason, dissimulation, abject fear,
The appalling ministers of heavenly vengeance,
Eternally shall lour . . .

Va. But shall we give them,
That so they may avail themselves of it
To injure Rome, their vitiating wealth?
Far more than steel, gold in the tyrant's hands
We've reason now to deprecate.

People. 'Tis true ;
We will not to their baseness lend such arms :
But hence shall we another's make our own ?
What boots to us, who in our hands have swords,
And at our breasts a mail of liberty,
What boots to us the ministry of gold ?

Va. Let it be burn'd ; let all the tyrant's wealth
Be burn'd, or to the Tyber's whelming waves
Committed.

People. And with these eternally
May their remembrance perish . . .

Va. Likewise perish
All recollection of our servitude.

Col. Magnanimous, and worthy of yourselves,
Is the decision ; your decree in this
Shall quickly be fulfil'd.

People. Yes ; but meanwhile
The names of the conspirators divulge,

And the conspiracy.

Col. . . . Oh heaven! I tremble
In undertaking such a cruel office . . .

People. And Brutus stands immoveable and silent.
He seems to have his eyes suffused with tears,
Though shedding none, and fierce his downcast looks
He fixes on the earth.—Oh Collatinus,
Do thou then quickly speak.

Col. . . . Oh heaven! . . .

Va. But what
Then ails thee? The deliverer of Rome,
The husband of Lucretia, and our consul,
Art thou not, Collatinus? Canst thou be
The traitors' friend? And canst thou feel compassion
Towards those who for their country felt it not?

Col. —When you shall hear me speak, those very
pangs

Which tear my heart and paralyze my tongue
Will speedily assail you: weeping, mute,
Alarm'd, with pity and amazement stricken,
Already I behold you—To the king
Mamilius went the bearer of this scroll:
I caused it to be taken from his hands,
Ere he from Rome departed: and the traitor
Confess'd, affrighted, that the citizens
Herein inscribed had sworn, the following night
To open to the king the gates of Rome.

People. Oh treason! Let the guilty perish . . .

Va. Death
Were a light punishment for such a crime.

Col. The fatal paper let Valerius read
To you assembled. See it; take it: . . . I
Cannot pronounce these names.

Va. What do I see? . . .

Oh execrable list! . . . With his own hand
Each one his name has written? . . . Romans, hear.—
Aquilus the sire, and his six sons,
Head the conspiracy; they first are written.
Oh heaven! . . .

Col. To each of them, the paper's shewn,
They all confess'd it. They are now in chains;
And ye will see them dragg'd, ere long, before you.

Va. . . . Alas! . . . There follow . . .

People. Who does follow? Speak.

Va. . . . Alas! . . . It is incredible. I read . . .

Four names . . .

People. Whose names? Proceed . . .

Va. They were the brothers

Of Brutus' consort . . .

People. The Vitellii?

Col. Ah! . . .

Soon will ye hear far other names than these.

—And in your presence, one by one, ere long . . .

Va. What boots it then, that one by one I name
them?

Marcii, Octavii, Fabii, I read,

And many, many more, alas!—The last

Make e'en my hair to stand on end with horror . . .

Yes . . . from my hands . . . at such a sight as this . . .

The paper falls . . .

People. Who can they be?

Va. Oh heaven! . . .

Ye . . . never will believe . . .

(UNIVERSAL SILENCE.)

Bru. —The names last written,
Are Titus and Tiberius.

People. Thy sons! . . .
Unhappy father! Inauspicious day! . . .

Br. Oh day, to you auspicious! Brutus knows
No other sons but Roman citizens;
And these are such no longer. Yesterday
I swore for Rome's sake to shed all my blood:
This oath I'm ready, and at every risk,
To-day to consummate . . .

People. Ah wretched father!

(UNIVERSAL SILENCE.)

Br. —But what, with horror stupified, and dumb,
Do I see universal Rome? For Brutus
Does every individual tremble here?—
But say, whom does the fiercest peril menace,
Brutus or Rome? Each man that hears my voice
Wills beyond all things, or he ought to will,
To make his country free, secure, and great;
Whate'er the consequence he ought to will it.
Chains are in store for us, and cruel slaughter;
For Rome her consul trembles; hence her people
Cannot now tremble for a single father.
The soft affections, and the gush of tears,
(That in the forum from a Roman eye
Can never start, save when they're shed for Rome,)
The soft affections and the gush of tears,
In the profound recesses of our hearts
Are now suppress'd.—I first should shew to you
(Thus destiny ordains) what permanent
And lofty base 'tis indispensable
For us to give to an eternal city.—
Lictors, advance; and let the criminals
Be quickly dragg'd in chains into the forum.—
Now thou'rt the only, the true king of Rome,

People of Mars. Thy majesty by these
 Hath been offended; signal punishment
 Is now their due; and the avenging thee
 Devolves upon the consuls . . .¹

SCENE THE SECOND.

•*Brutus and Collatinus in the Rostrum. Valerius,
 People, Senators, Patricians. The Conspirators
 all in Chains among the Lictors; the last of these
 Titus and Tiberius.*

People. Ah! how many,
 How many may the traitors be? . . . Oh heaven!
 Behold the sons of Brutus! . . .

Col. Ah! I cannot
 Longer restrain my tears . . .

Bru. —A great day,
 A noble day is this, and evermore
 Will be a memorable one for Rome.—
 Oh ye, perfidiously base, who dared
 Your scarce-awaken'd country to betray,
 Behold ye all before assembled Rome.
 Let each of you, if it be possible,
 Defend himself before her.—All are silent.—
 Rome and the consuls ask of you yourselves,
 Whether to you, convicted criminals,
 The punishment of death be due?—

(UNIVERSAL SILENCE.)

Bru. —To death

¹ Brutus is silent in seeing the Actors return with the conspirators.

Then all of you are equitably sentenced.
 The people's majesty, with one consent,
 Pronounces th' irreversible decree.
 Why should we longer tarry?—Oh! my colleague
 Weeps, and is silent. . . . Silent is the senate . . .
 Silent the citizens.

People. Oh fatal moment! . . .
 Yet just and necessary is their death.

Tit. One innocent alone, amongst us all,
 Now dies; and this is he.

People. Oh pity! See,
 He of his brother speaks.

Tib. Believe him not;
 Or we are both equally innocent,
 Or equally transgressors. In the paper
 My name is written next to his.

Bru. No one
 Whose name is written in that fatal scroll
 Can be call'd innocent. Some may, perchance,
 Have been less culpable in their intent,
 But only to the gods the intent is known;
 And it would be an arbitrary judgment,
 And thence unjust, the guilty to absolve,
 As to condemn them from the inference
 Drawn from profess'd intention. It would be
 A spurious judgment, such as kings assume;
 Not such as by a just and simple people
 Is held in reverence: people who alone
 To the tremendous sacred laws submit;
 And who, save of the letter of those laws,
 In their decrees, of thought avail themselves.

Col. . . . Romans, 'tis true, that these unhappy
 youths

Were with the rest of the conspirators
Involved ; but that they were solicited,
Confounded, tamper'd with, and finally,
By the iniquitous Mamilius
In an inextricable snare entrapp'd,
Is also as indubitably true.

He made them think that all was in the power
Of the expell'd Tarquini : thence their names
(Would you believe it ?) also they subscribed
Only to save their sire from death . . .

People. Oh heaven ! . . .

And is this true indeed ? We should then save
These two alone . . .

Bru. Alas ! what do I hear ? . . .

Is this the people's voice ? Just, free, and strong,
Ye now would make yourselves, and how ? would ye
Lay, as the base of such an edifice,
A partial application of your laws ?
That I, a father, might not weep, would ye
Now make so many other citizens,
Sons, brothers, fathers, weep ? To the keen axe,
Which they have merited, shall now so many,
So many others yield their passive necks,
And shall two culprits only be exempt
From this, because they seem not what they are ?
They were the consul's sons, although in deeds
They were not so : 'mong the conspirators
With their own hand were they enroll'd : or all
Or none of them should die. Absolve them all,
And at once ruin Rome ; save two alone,
And if it *seem* so, it would be unjust.
Now, less a just than a compassionate judge,
Hath Collatinus these two youths defended,

Asserting, that they wish'd to save their father ;
Perhaps this was true ; but perhaps the others wish'd,
Their fathers some, their brothers some, and some
Their sons to save ; and not on this account
Are they less guilty, since they rather chose
To sacrifice their country than their friends.
The father in his heart may weep for this ;
But in the first place should the genuine consul
Secure the safety of his native country . . .
And afterwards, by mighty grief o'erwhelm'd,
Fall on the bodies of his lifeless sons.—
Ye will behold, ere many hours are past,
To what excess of danger, by these men,
Ye have been brought : to fortify our hearts
In strength imparted by the strength of others,
In individual strength to make us strong,
Inflexible as champions of freedom,
Cruel, though just, 'tis indispensable
That we abide this memorable test.—
Depart, oh lictors ; be the culprits all
Bound to the columns ; let the hatchet fall
Upon them.—I have not a heart of steel . . .
¹ Ah ! Collatinus, this is the time for thee
To pity me : perform for me the rest.²

People. Oh cruel sight ! . . . The wretched father
dare
Not look at them . . . And yet, their death is just.

¹ Brutus sinks on his seat, and turns his eyes from the spectacle.

² Collatinus sees the conspirators disposed in order, and bound to the columns.

Bru. —The punishment approaches.—The delinquents

Have heard the sentence of the consuls . . . Now
 Think on the pangs of the distracted father . . .
 The cleaving hatchet o'er each neck impends . . .
 Oh heaven ! my very heart is rent in twain ! . . .
 I with my mantle am constrain'd to hide
 Th' insufferable sight ! . . . This may, at least,
 Be granted to the father . . .
 But ye, fix ye on them your eyes : now Rome
 Free and eternal rises from that blood.

Col. Oh superhuman strength ! . . .

Va. Of Rome is Brutus
 The father and the god . . .

People. Yes, Brutus is
 The father and the god of Rome . . .

Bru. I am
 The most unhappy man that ever lived.

¹ The curtain falls, while the lictors stand ready to strike the conspirators.

SONNET.

TO

THE NOBLE LADY

THE COUNTESS LOUISA STOLBERG

OF ALBANY.

Sometimes regretting that thy gentle name
Is yet suppress'd by me, in front of these
To thee too-oft repeated tragedies,
Whence I of folly p'rhaps shall reap the blame;
Now would I grace with thee the one whose frame
The least displeases thee; though all my ease,
Though all the pleasure which gave power to please,
From thee, sole source of inspiration, came.
The at once innocent and horrid love
Of the unhappy maid from Cinyras sprung,
Always caused tears from thy bright eyes to flow;
These tears imperiously my bosom move
To consecrate to thee, (who heard'st it sung
With sympathetic feelings,) Myrrha's woe.

M Y R R I A.

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CINYRAS.

EURYCLEA.

CECRIS.

Chorus.

MYRRHA.

Priests.

PEREUS.

People.

SCENE,—The Palace in Cyprus.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cecris, Euryclea.

Ce. Come, faithful Euryclea: now the dawn
Scarce glimmers; and to me so soon as this
My royal consort is not wont to come.
Now thou canst tell me all that thou dost know
Of our afflicted daughter: even now
Thy troubled countenance and half-stifled sighs
Announce to me . . .

Eu. Oh queen! . . . Unhappy Myrrha
Drags on a life far worse than any death.
I dare not to the monarch represent
Her horrible state: the troubles of a maid
Ill could a father understand; thou canst,

A mother. Hence to thee I come ; and pray
That thou wilt hear me.

Ce. It is true, that I
For a long time have seen the lustre languish
Of her rare beauty : obstinate and mute,
A mortal melancholy dims in her
That fascinating look : and, could she weep ! . . .
But before me she's silent ; evermore
Her eyes are, with tears never shed, suffused.
In vain do I embrace her ; and in vain
Request, entreat her, to divulge her grief ;
Her grief she contradicts ; while day by day
I see her by that grief consumed.

Eu. A daughter
To you she is by blood, to me by love ;
Thou that I brought her up know'st well : and I
Exist in her alone ; and almost half
Of the fourth lustre is already spent
Since every day I've clasp'd her to my breast
In my fond arms . . . And now, can it be true,
That towards me, to whom she was accusom'd
From earliest childhood to speak all her thoughts,
E'en towards me she now appears reserved ?
And if I speak to her of her distress,
To me too she denies it, and insists,
And seems displeased with me . . . But yet she oft,
Spite of herself, bursts into tears before me.

Ce. Such vehement sadness, in so young a heart,
At first I deem'd to be the consequence
Of the irresolution which she felt
In the oft-urged selection of a consort.
The most illustrious, powerful potentates
Of Greece and Asia, all in rivalry

From the wide-spreading rumour of her beauty,
 To Cyprus flock'd: and, as respected us,
 She was the perfect mistress of her choice.
 These various impulses, unknown, discordant,
 Might in a youthful bosom well excite
 No slight disturbance. She his valour praised
 In one; his courteous manners in another;
 'This was endow'd with ampler territories;
 In that were majesty and comeliness
 Blended consummately; and he who caught
 Her eyes the most, she fear'd the least perchance
 Might gratify her father. Thoroughly
 I, as a mother and a woman, know
 What conflicts, in the young unpractised heart
 Of a timid virgin, might be well excited
 By such incertitude. But when by Pereus,
 Heir of Epirus, every doubt seem'd banish'd;
 To whom for power, nobility, and youth,
 Valour, and comeliness, and sense, no one
 Could be compar'd; then, when the lofty choice
 Of Myrrha gain'd the sanction of her parents;
 When she, on this account, ought to exult
 With self-congratulation, we behold
 The storm more furiously arise in her,
 And more insufferable agonies
 Consume her every day . . . At such a sight
 I feel my heart as if asunder torn.

Eu. Ah, had she never made that fatal choice!
 From that day forth her anguish has increased;
 This very night, the last one that precedes
 Her last nuptial rites, (oh heaven!) I fear'd
 That it had been to her the last of life!—
 Motionless, silent, I lay in my bed,

From her's not far remote ; and, still intent
 On all her movements, made pretence to sleep :
 But months and months have past, that I have seen
 her

In such extremity, that all repose
 Flies from my aged limbs. I for my daughter
 'Th' assistance of benignant sleep invoked
 Most silently within myself : o'er her
 For many, many nights he has not spread
 His downy wings. Her sobs and sighs at first
 Were almost smother'd ; they were few, were broken ;
 Then (hearing me no longer) they increased
 To such ungovernable agony,
 That, at the last, against her will, they changed
 To passionate tears, to sobs, to piercing screams.
 Amid her agitation, from her lips
 One word alone escaped, " Death ! . . . death ! " and
 oft,

In broken accents, she repeated it.
 I started from my couch ; precipitous
 I ran to her ; and scarce had she beheld me,
 Ere, in the midst, she suddenly repress'd
 Each tear, each sigh, each word, and, recomposed
 In royal stateliness, as if almost
 Incensed with me, in a firm voice she cried,
 " Why comest thou to me ? What wouldst thou ?
 Hence ! " . . .

I could not answer her ; I wept, embraced her,
 Then wept again . . . At length my speech return'd.
 Oh how did I implore her, how conjure her
 To tell me her affliction, that, at last,
 Thus in her bosom pent, would, with her life,
 My life destroy . . . Thou surely, though a mother,

Could'st not have spoken to her with more fond,
 And more persuasive love.—She knows it well
 How much I love her; and, at my discourse,
 Once more the torrents from her eyes gush'd forth,
 And she embraced me, and with tenderness
 To my fond importunities replied.
 But still, inflexibly reserved, she said,
 That every virgin, when the nuptial day
 Approaches, is oppress'd with transient grief;
 And she commanded me not to divulge
 Her anguish to her parents. But, alas!
 So deeply rooted is her malady,
 So fearful are its inward ravages,
 That I run tremblingly to thee; and beg
 That, by thy means, these rites may be delay'd:
 To death the virgin goes, be sure of this.—
 Thou art a mother; . . . I say nothing more.

Ce. . . . Ah! . . . choak'd by weeping, . . . scarcely
 . . . can I speak.—

Whence can this malady arise, ah whence? . . .
 What other suffering, at her youthful age,
 Is there, except the suffering of love?
 But if by Pereus she is inflamed,
 By her spontaneously chosen, whence,
 When on the point of gaining him, this grief?
 And if another flame feed on her heart,
 Why hath she chosen Pereus herself
 Among so many others?

Eu. . . . Her fierce grief
 Doth not, I swear to thee, arise from love.
 She always was observed by me; nor could she,
 Without my seeing it, resign her heart
 To any passion: and she would, be sure,

Have told it me, her mother as to years,
But, in her love, a sister. Her deportment,
Her countenance, her sighs, her very silence,
Ah! all convince me that she loves not Pereus.
She, if not joyous, was, before she chose,
Tranquil at least; and thou know'st well how she
Delay'd to chuse. But yet, assuredly
No other man pleased her ere she saw Pereus :
'Tis true, she seem'd to give to him the preference,
Because it was, or so at least she deem'd it,
Her duty to chuse one. She loves him not ;
To me it seems so : yet what other suitor,
Compared with noble Pereus, can she love ?
I know her to possess a lofty heart ;
A heart in which a flame that were not lofty
Could never enter. This can I safely swear :
The man that she could love . . . of royal blood
That man must be, or he were not her lover.
Now, who of these have ye admitted here,
Whom at her will she could not with her hand
Make happy ? Then her grief is not from love.
Love, though it feed itself with tears and sighs,
Yet still it leaves I know not what of hope,
That vivifies the centre of the heart ;
But in her deep impenetrable gloom
There glimmers no coy radiance : in her wound
Festering and irremediable, there lurks
No sanative balsamic antidote ! . . .
Ah, could the death that she invokes for ever
Be granted first to me ! I should at least
Not see her thus by a slow fire consumed ! . . .

Ce. Thou dost distract me! . . . To these marriage
rites

Never will I consent, if they are destin'd
To take from us our only daughter . . . Go;
Return to her; and do not say to her
That thou hast spoken with me. I myself,
Soon as the tears are from my eyes dispersed,
And my face recomposed, will thither come.

Eu. Ah, quickly come. I will return to her;
I am impatient once more to behold her.
Oh heaven! who knows if she has not once more
Been with these frantic paroxysms seized,
While I have thus at length with thee conversed?
Alas! what pity do I feel for thee,
Unhappy mother! . . . I fly hence; but thou,
Ah, linger not! . . . The less thou dost delay,
The more good wilt thou do . . .

Ce. How much delay
Costs me, thou may'st conceive: but I will not
Call her at such an unaccustom'd hour,
Nor go to her, much less present myself
With visage incomposed. It is not fit
To impress her either with distress or fear:
So modest, timid, pliable is she,
That no means with that noble temper can
Be too indulgent. Quickly, go; repose
In me, as I in thee alone repose.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Cecris.

Ce. From whence can this originate? Already

The year is almost spent, which I've consumed
 With Euryclea in surmises vain;
 And yet no trace whence Myrrha's sorrow springs
 Can I discern!—Perhaps the gods themselves,
 Envious of our prosperity, would snatch
 From us so rare a daughter, the sole comfort,
 Sole hope of both her parents. Oh ye gods,
 'Twere better never to have given her to us!
 Oh Venus! thou sublime divinity
 Of this devoted isle, sacred to thee,
 Perchance her too great beauty moves thy envy!
 And hence perchance thou, equally with her,
 Reducest me to this distracted state.
 Ah! yes, thou wilt that I should thus atone
 In tears of blood, for my inordinate,
 Presumptuous transports of a partial mother.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Cinyras, Cecris.

Cin. Weep not, oh lady. I have briefly heard
 The painful narrative; to this disclosure
 I prompted Euryclea. Ah! believe me,
 Sooner a thousand times would I expire,
 Than with our idolized and only daughter
 Adopt coercive means. Who could have thought
 That by this marriage, which was once her choice,
 She could be brought to such extremity?
 But let it be dissolved. My life, my realm,
 And even my glory vanishes to nothing,
 If I see not our only daughter happy.

Ce. Yet Myrrha ne'er was versatile. We saw her
 In understanding far surpass her years;

Discreet in every wish ; constant and eager
 Our smallest wishes to anticipate.
 She knows full well, that in her noble choice
 We deem'd ourselves most fortunate : she cannot,
 No, never, hence repent of it.

Cin. But yet

If she in heart repent of it !—Oh, lady,
 Hear her : all the soft pleadings of a mother
 Do thou adopt with her ; do thou at length
 Compel her to unfold her heart to thee,
 Since there is time for this. Myself meanwhile
 Will unfold mine to thee ; and I assure thee,
 Nay, e'en I swear, that of my heart's first thoughts
 My daughter is the object. It is true,
 I pleased myself in thinking I should form
 Alliance with the monarch of Epirus :
 And the young Percus, his noble son,
 Adds, to the future hope of a rich kingdom,
 Other advantages, in my esteem
 More precious far. A character humane,
 A heart no less compassionate than lofty,
 Doth he evince. Besides, he seems to me
 By Myrrha's beauties fervently inflamed.—
 I never could select a worthier consort
 To ensure my daughter happiness ; no doubts
 Of these pledged marriage rites torment his heart ;
 His father's indignation and his own,
 If we renounced our covenanted faith,
 Would be most just ; and their rage might to us
 Be not formidable : thus behold
 Many and potent reasons in the eyes
 Of almost every prince, but none in mine ;
 Nature made me a father, chance a king.

Those which are deem'd by others of my rank,
 Reasons of state, to which they are accustom'd
 To make all natural affections yield,
 In my paternal bosom would not weigh
 Against a solitary sigh of Myrrha's.
 I, by her happiness alone, can be
 Myself made happy. Go; say this to her;
 Assure her also that she need not fear
 Displeasing me in telling me the truth:
 Nought let her fear, except to make ourselves,
 Through her own means, unhappy. I meanwhile,
 By questions artfully proposed, will learn
 From Pereus if he deem his love return'd;
 And thus will I prepare him for the issue,
 No less afflictive to himself than me.
 But yet the time is brief for doing this,
 If fate decree that we retract our purpose.

Ce. Thou speakest well: I fly to her.—It brings
 Great solace to me, in our grief, to see
 That one accordant will, one love, is ours.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cinyras, Pereus.

Pe. Behold me here, obedient to thy wishes.
 I hope, oh king, the hour is not far distant
 When with th' endearing epithet of father
 I may accost thee . . .

Cin. Listen to me, Pereus,—
 If thou well know thyself, thou canst not fail
 To be convinced how much a partial father

Must be transported with exceeding joy
 In th' expectation that his only daughter
 Would find in thee a consort. Without doubt,
 Had I myself been destined to select
 A spouse for Myrrha, I had chosen thee
 Among the many and illustrious rivals
 That, with thyself, contended for her hand.
 Thence thou thyself may'st judge how doubly dear
 Thou wert to me when by herself elected.
 Thou, in the judgment of impartial men,
 In all pretensions wert unparagon'd;
 But, in my judgment, more than for thy blood,
 And thy hereditary realm, wert thou
 Unparagon'd for other qualities
 Intrinsically thine, whence thou must be,
 Although a private man, eternally
 Greater than any king . . .

Pe. Ah father ! . . . (I
 E'en now exult to call thee by this name)
 Father, my greatest, nay, my only value,
 Consists in pleasing thee. I have presumed
 To interrupt thee ; pardon me ; but I
 Cannot, or ere I merit them, receive
 From thee so many praises. To my heart
 Thy speech will be a high encouragement
 To make me that which thou believ'st me now,
 Or wishest me to be. Thy son-in-law,
 And Myrrha's consort, largely should I be
 With every lofty quality endow'd :
 And I accept from thee the augury
 Of virtue.

Cin. Ah, thou speakest as thou art !
 And since thou art such, I shall dare to speak

To thee as to a son.—I clearly see
 Thou lovest Myrrha with a genuine love ;
 And I should wrong thee most unworthily
 Could I e'en doubt of this. But . . . tell me, Pereus, . .
 If my request is not too indiscreet,
 Art thou as much beloved ?

Pc. . . . I ought to hide
 Nothing from thee.—Ah, Myrrha would, methinks,
 Love me again, and yet it seems she cannot.
 I cherish'd once a hope of her regard,
 And yet I hope t' obtain it ; or, at least,
 My flattering wishes still prolong the dream.
 'Tis true, that, most inexplicably, she
 Persists in her reserve. Thou, Cinyras,
 Although thou be a father, still retainest
 Thy youthful vigour, and rememberest love.
 Know then, that evermore with trembling steps,
 And as if by compulsion, she accosts me ;
 A deathly paleness o'er her countenance steals ;
 And her fine eyes towards me are never turn'd.
 A few irresolute and broken words
 She falters out, involved in mortal coldness ;
 Her eyes, eternally suffused with tears,
 She fixes on the ground ; in speechless grief
 Her soul is buried ; a pale sickliness
 Dims, not annihilates, her wond'rous charms :—
 Behold her state. Yet of connubial rites
 She speaks ; and now thou would'st pronounce, that
 she
 Desired those rites ; now, that, far worse than death,
 She dreaded them ; now she herself assigns
 The day for these, and now she puts it off.
 If I enquire the reason of her grief,

Myrrha should now capriciously repent ! . . .

Pe. No more ; I understand thee. To a lover,
Who loves as I do, canst thou represent
The beloved object wretched for his sake ?
Could I, though innocently, deem myself
The origin of all her wretchedness,
And not expire with grief ?—Ah, Myrrha, now
Pronounce on me, and on my destiny,
A final sentence ; fearlessly pronounce it,
If Pereus' love be irksome ; yet for this
Never shall I regret that I have loved thee.
Oh, could I make her joyful with my tears ! . . .
To me 'twould be a blessing e'en to die,
So that she might be happy.

Ch. Pereus, who
Can hear thee without weeping ? . . . No, a heart
More faithful, more impassion'd than thine own,
There cannot be. Ah ! as thou hast to me,
Could'st thou disclose it also to my daughter :
She could not hear thee, and refuse t' unfold
To thee with equal confidence her own.
I do not think that she repents her choice ;
(Who, knowing thee, could do this ?) but perchance
Thou may'st solicit from her heart the source
Of her conceal'd distress.—Behold, she comes ;
I had already summon'd her. With her
I leave thee. To the interview of lovers
Fathers are ever a restraint. Now, prince,
Fully reveal to her thy lofty heart,
A heart by which all others must be sway'd.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Myrrha, Percus.

My. With Percus he leaves me . . . Fatal trial !
This rends my heart indeed.

Pe. At length, oh Myrrha,
The day is come, that which, if thou wert st,
Is destined to make me supremely happy.
Thy hair with nuptial coronals adorn'd,
Thy form enveloped in a pompous robe,
I see indeed : but on thy countenance,
Thy looks, thy gestures, and in every step,
Pale melancholy lours. Oh Myrrha, he
Who loves thee far more than his proper life,
Cannot behold thee with a mien like this
To an indissoluble tie approach.
This is the hour, th' important hour is this,
When 'tis no more allowable for thee
To pass delusions on thyself or others.
Thou should'st divulge to me (whate'er it be)
The cause of thy distress ; or should'st at least
Confess to me that thou dost not repose
Thy confidence in me ; that I bewray
Thy injudicious choice, and that at heart
Thou art repentant, and would'st fain retract.
I shall not hence account that I am wrong'd ;
Oh no ! though this sad heart will be surcharged
With mortal wretchedness. But what car'st thou
For the distraction of a man not loved,
And slenderly esteem'd ? It too much now
Imports to me not to make thee unhappy.
Then speak to me explicitly and boldly.

But thou art mute and motionless? . . . Thy silence
Breathes disaffection, . . . death. Thy silence is
An answer too decisive : . . . thou dost hate me ;
And dar'st not say it . . . Now resume thy faith :
I instantly prepare myself to fly
For ever from thine eyes, since I am thus
An object of aversion . . . But if I
Was always so, how deserved I thy choice ?
If I became so afterwards, ah, tell me
In what I have offended thee ?

My. . . . Oh prince ! . . .

Thy overweening love depicts my grief
More poignant than it is. Beyond the bounds
Of truth thy heated phantasy impels thee.
With silence thy unprecedented words
I hear ; what wonder ? unexpected things,
Unacceptable, and e'en more than this,
Not true, dost thou express : how can I then
Reply to thee ?—This, for our nuptial rites,
Is the appointed day ; I hither come
To accomplish them : and doth he meanwhile doubt,
The consort chosen by myself, of me ?
'Tis true, perchance my spirits are not buoyant,
As her's should be who doth obtain a spouse
Distinguish'd like thyself : but pensiveness
In some is nature's cast ; and ill could he
Whose spirits stagnate in a constant ebb,
Trace the dim cause that interdicts their flow :
And often an officious questioning,
Instead of making manifest the cause,
Redoubles the effect.

Pc. I'm irksome to thee ;
I see it by unquestionable symptoms.

Alas ! I knew that thou could'st never love me ;
Yet in my infirm heart I had caress'd
At least the flattering hope thou didst not hate me :
In time, for thine and my peace, I perceive
That I deceived myself !—'Tis not (alas !)
Within my power to make thee hate me not :
But on myself doth it alone depend
To make thee not despise me. Now art thou
Freed, and released from all thy promised faith.
Against thy will illicitly I gain'd it :—
Not by thy parents, . . . and still less by me, . . .
By a false shame thou art restrain'd. Thou would'st,
Not to incur the blame of versatile,
Thine own worst enemy, render thyself
The victim of thy error : and dost thou
Hope I should suffer this ? Ah no !—That I
Love thee, that I deserve thee, now I ought
To prove this to thee by refusing thee . . .

My. Thou dost delight to exasperate my grief . .
Ah ! how can I be joyous in thy presence,
If I am destined always to behold
Thy love ill-pleased with mine ? Can I assign
The causes of a grief, for the most part
In me supposititious, which, indeed,
If true in part, perhaps has no other cause
Than the new state which I'm about to enter,
And the obligation to divide myself
From my beloved parents ; and the words
So oft repeated to myself, " Perhaps
" I never more shall see them . . . never more ?"
The long, long pilgrimage to other realms ;
The change of manners and the change of place ;
The long farewell to all familiar objects,
And all familiar friends, from childhood loved ;

And other thoughts, by thousands and by thousands,
 All passionate and tender, and all sad,
 And all indisputably better known,
 And felt more keenly, than by any other,
 By thy humane, courteous, and lofty heart.—
 I gave myself spontaneously to thee;
 Nor have I ever with repentant thoughts,
 I swear to thee, look'd back on this resolve.
 If it were so, I would have told it to thee:
 Thee, above all men, I esteem; from thee
 Nothing would I conceal, . . . that I would not
 Likewise, from my own consciousness, conceal.—
 Now I implore, let him who loves me best,
 Speak to me least of this my wretchedness,
 And 'twill in time, I feel assured, depart.
 Could I, not prizing thee, give thee my hand,
 I should despise myself: and how not prize thee?
 My lip knows not to speak that which my heart
 Doth not first dictate: yet that lip assures thee,
 Swears to thee, that I never will belong
 To any one but thee.—What more can I
 Profess to thee?

Pe. . . . Myrrha, I venture not
 To ask of thee *one thing*, which, could'st thou say it,
 Would give me life indeed! Fatal demand!
 'Twere death, I fear, to be resolved on this . . .
 Thou to be mine then dost not now disdain?
 Dost not repent of it, and no delay?

My. No, none; this is the day; I will be thine.—
 But let our sails be hoisted to the winds
 To-morrow, and for ever let us leave
 These shores behind us.

Pe. Do I hear thee rightly?

With such abrupt transition how canst thou
Thus differ from thyself? It tortures thee
So much to abandon thy beloved parents,
Thy native country, yet would'st thou depart
Speedily thus for ever . . .

My. I, . . . for ever . . .

Would . . . thus abandon them ; . . and die of . . grief

Pe. What do I hear ? Thy anguish hath betra-
thee ; . . .

Thy words and looks are prompted by despair.
I swear that I will never be the means
Of thy destruction ; never . . . of my own
Too certainly . . .

My. . . . 'Tis true . . . 'tis too, too true ; . . .

I am distracted by a mighty woe . . .
But no, believe me not.—Inflexibly
I to my purpose keep—While I have thus
My bosom harden'd as it were with grief,
My parting hence will be less keenly felt :
A solace in thyself . . .

Pe. . . . No, Myrrha, no : . . .

I am the cause, I am, (though innocent)
Of the dire conflict, which thus lacerates,
And agitates thy heart.—I will not now
Longer prevent with my importunate presence
Needful alleviation of thy grief.—
Do thou thyself, oh Myrrha, to thy parents
Propose some means that may deliver thee
From ties so inauspicious ; or from them
Thou'lt hear to-day of Pereus' violent death.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Myrrha.

My. Ah, go not to my parents! . . . Hear me, . . .
hear me! . . .

He flies from me . . . Oh heaven! what have I said?
Let me to Euryclea quickly run:
No, not one instant would I with myself
Remain alone . . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Myrrha, Euryclea.

Eu. Oh whither dost thou fly
Thus with such breathless haste, beloved daughter?

My. Where can I find, if not in thee, some solace?
To thee I came . . .

Eu. I, from a distance, long
Have watch'd thee carefully. Thou knowest well
I never can abandon thee: I hope
That thou wilt pardon me. From thence I saw
Pereus rush troubled forth; and I find thee
With heavier grief oppress'd: ah, dearest daughter,
Thy tears at least may freely have a vent
Within my breast.

My. Ah yes, dear Euryclea,
With thee I may at least shed tears . . . I feel
As if my heart would burst from checking them.

Eu. And wilt thou, in a state like this, persist,
Oh daughter, in these nymenical rites?

My. I hope my agonies may kill me first . . .
But no; that cannot be; the time's too short; . . .

They afterwards will kill me, kill me soon . . .
 Death, . . . death, . . . I have no other wish . . . but
 death . . .

No other destiny, save death . . . deserve . . .

Eu. — Myrrha, no other furies can assail
 With such barbarity thy youthful breast,
 Save those of love . . .

My. What dar'st thou say to me?
 What cruel falsehood? . . .

Eu. Ah, do not, I beseech thee,
 Be grieved with me. For a long time I have thought
 so :

But if it thus displease thee, I will dare
 No more to say it to thee. Ah, may'st thou
 Preserve with me the confidence of weeping!
 Neither do I know well if I believe
 What I have said; moreover, to thy mother
 I hitherto have strenuously denied it . . .

My. What do I hear? Oh heaven! does she per-
 chance
 Also suspect it? . . .

Eu. And who, seeing thus
 A tender virgin in excessive grief,
 And grief apparently without a cause,
 Would not deem love the origin of this?
 Ah! were thy grief from love alone! at least
 Some remedy might then be found.—Immersed
 In this perplexing doubt for a long time,
 I to the altar dared one day to go
 Of Venus, our sublime divinity;
 With tears, with incense, and persuasive prayers,
 With labouring heart, before her sacred image
 Prostrate, I ventured to pronounce thy name . . .

My. Ah! what audacity! What hast thou done?
 Venus! . . . Oh heaven! . . . inimical to me . . .
 The force of her implacable revenge . . .
 What do I say? . . . Alas! . . . I shudder, . . . tremble . . .

Eu. 'Tis true, I was audaciously officious:
 The angry deity disdain'd my vows;
 The incense, in a smouldering gloom involved,
 With difficulty burn'd; and, downwards driven,
 The smoke collected round my hoary head.
 Would'st thou hear further? I presumed to raise
 To the stern image my afflicted eyes,
 And horribly incensed with indignation,
 With threatening looks the goddess seem'd to me
 Herself to drive me from her sacred feet.
 With trembling steps I totter'd from the temple,
 Palsied with fear . . . In telling this, I feel
 My hair with horror once more stand on end . . .

My. And thou with terror mak'st me also shudder.
 What hast thou dared to do? By Myrrha now
 Must no celestial power, and much less that
 Of our tremendous goddess, be invoked.
 I am abandon'd by the gods; my breast
 Opens its chambers to the ravening furies;
 There they alone authority possess,
 And residence.—Ah! if there still remains
 In thee the shadow of a genuine pity,
 My faithful Euryclea, (thou alone
 Canst do it,) save me from despair: 'tis slow,
 Too slow, although 'tis infinite, my grief.

Eu. Thou mak'st me tremble . . . What can I? . . .

My. . . . I ask thee
 To abridge my woes. By little and by little
 Thou seest my o'er-worn, o'er-task'd frame decay;

My lingering agonies destroy my parents;
 A burden to myself, a curse to others,
 I never can escape: 'twere pity, love,
 To expedite my death; from thee I ask it . . .

Eu. Oh heaven! . . . from me? . . . My very ut-
 terance fails, . . .

My breath, . . . my thought . . .

My. Ah no, thou lov'st me not!
 I weakly deem'd that in thy aged breast
 There dwelt a comprehensive tenderness . . .
 Yet thou thyself didst in my tender years
 Exhort me to nobility of thought:
 Oft have I heard from thee that virtuous souls
 Should prefer death to infamy. Alas! . . .
 What do I say? . . . But thou dost hear me not . . .
 Motionless, . . . mute, . . . thou scarcely breath'st! Oh
 heaven! . . .

What have I said? Distracted with my pangs . . .
 I know not what I've said: Ah, pardon me;
 My second mother, be once more thyself . . .

Eu. . . . Oh daughter, daughter! . . . Thou ask death
 from me?

Thou death from me? . . .

My. Esteem me not ungrateful;
 Nor that the anguish of my own despair
 Robs me of pity for the pangs of others.—
 Wilt thou not see me then extinct in Cyprus?
 Thou must perforce, ere it be long, be told,
 That ere the vessel reach Epirus' shore,
 Myrrha had breathed her last.

Eu. In vain dost thou
 Presume to yield to these abhorred nuptials. . .
 I to thy parents fly to tell the whole . . .

My. Ah, do it not, or irretrievably
 Thou forfeitest my love: ah, do it not,
 I pray thee; in the name of thy true love
 I do conjure thee. From a troubled heart
 Accents escape which should not be recorded.—
 An ample solace (one which hitherto
 I've not allow'd) hath been my tears, with thee,
 The speaking of my grief: in me already
 My courage hence is doubled.—A few hours
 Are wanting to my solemn nuptial rite. .
 Be ever near me: let us go. Meanwhile
 It is thy province to confirm me more
 In my inevitable lofty purpose.
 Thou by thy faithful council, and thy more
 Than mother's love, at once should'st strengthen me;
 Thou should'st so act, that firmly I pursue
 The sole remaining honourable track.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cinyras, Cecris.

Ce. There is no doubt that Pereus, though he be
 Not yet return'd to us, by Myrrha's words
 Was wholly mortified. She loves him not;
 I am convinced of this; and 'tis too certain
 That perseverance in these purposed nuptials
 Will in the end conduct her to the tomb.

Cin. For the last trial now, will we ourselves
 Hear from her lips the truth. I, in thy name,
 Have summon'd her to meet thee in this place.
 None of us, lastly, would compel her choice:

She knows how much we love her ; we, to whom
 Ourselves are not more dear. To me it seems
 Now utterly impossible, that she,
 In this respect, should close to us her heart ;
 To us, who have made her the arbitress
 Not only of herself, but of ourselves.

Ce. Behold, she comes ! . . . and oh ! she seems to
 me

Somewhat more joyful, and her step more firm . . .
 Ah ! could she be again what once she was !
 At the sole reappearance in her face
 E'en of a smile of joy, I quickly seem
 Restored once more to life.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Myrrha, Cingras, Cecriis.

Ce. Beloved daughter,
 Ah, come to us ! ah come !

My. What do I see ?
 Oh heaven ! my father also ! . . .

Cin. Haste, advance ;
 Our only hope and life, advance securely ;
 And apprehend not my paternal aspect
 More than thou fear'st thy mother's. We are both
 Ready to hear thee. Now, if thou art pleased
 The cause to tell us of thy cruel state,
 Thou giv'st us life ; but if it rather please thee,
 Or spare thy apprehensive delicacy
 More, to conceal it, thou may'st also, daughter,
 Conceal it ; for thy pleasure will be ours.
 To eternize the matrimonial tie
 One hour alone is waiting : every one

Deems it a thing decided : but, if yet
 Thy will is changed ; if thy committed faith
 Be irksome to thy heart ; if thy free choice,
 Though once spontaneous, be no longer such ;
 Be bold ; fear nothing in the world , reveal
 All the misgivings of thy heart to us.
 Thou art by nothing bound ; and we ourselves
 The first release thee ; and thy generous lover,
 Worthy of thee, confirms this liberty.
 Nor will we tax thee with inconstancy :
 Rather will we admit, that thoughts mature,
 Though unforeseen, constrain thee to this change.
 By base regards thou never canst be moved ;
 Thy noble character, thy lofty thoughts,
 Thy love for us, full well we know them all :
 A step of thee, and of thy blood unworthy,
 Thou never could'st e'en think it. Freely then
 Do thou fulfil thy wish. Provided thou
 Art once more happy, with that happiness
 Thou renderest thy parents happy also.
 Now, this thy present will whate'er it be,
 Do thou to us reveal it as to brothers.

Ce. Ah yes, thou seest, Myrrha ! Never didst thou
 Hear words of more persuasive tenderness,
 More mild, more tender, from thy mother's lips
 Than these.

My. . . . Is there a torment in the world
 That can compare with mine ! . . .

Ce. But what is this ?
 Sighing, thou mutterest to thyself ?

Cin. Ah let,
 Ah let thy heart speak to us : we will use
 No other language with thee—Quick, reply.

My. . . . My lord . . .

Cin. Ah Myrrha, 'tis a sad beginning :
To thee I am a father, not a lord :
Canst thou invoke me with another name,
Oh daughter ?

My. Myrrha, this is the last conflict.—
Be strong, my soul . . .

Cc. Oh heaven ! . . . The hues of death
Upon her countenance . . .

My. On mine ? . . .

Cin. But whence
Tremblest thou thus ? At me ? . . .

My. . . . I tremble not . . .

Me thinks—or I, at least, no more shall tremble,
Since ye now so compassionately hear me.—
Your only, your too well beloved daughter,
I well know that I am. I see you always,
My joys enjoying, grieving in my griefs ;
E'en this my grief increases. Mine, alas !
Passes the confines of a natural sorrow ;
In vain I hide it ; and to you would speak it, . . .
If I knew it myself.—My fatal sadness
With growing years augmented every day,
Long ere, amid the illustrious company
Of noble lovers, Pereus I selected.
Within my breast an angry deity,
Unknown, inexorable, dwells ; and hence,
All power of mine is vain against his power . . .
Mother, believe me ; though I be but young,
My mind, e'en passing ordinary strength,
Was, and is, strong : but my distemper'd frame,
That yields o'er-burthen'd ; . . . and I feel myself
With slow, though sure steps, tottering to the tomb .

At food, though scanty, and though only touch'd
 At distant intervals, to me is poison :
 Sleep everlastingly forsakes my pillow ;
 Or dreams, with horrid images of death,
 My frame enervate more than sleepless nights.
 I do not find, throughout the day or night,
 A moment's peace, an instant of repose,
 A place that seems a resting place to me.
 Yet nothing in the shape of human comfort
 Do I presume to covet ; death I deem,
 Expect, solicit as, my only cure.
 But, for my punishment, does Nature yet,
 With her tenacious and invisible bands,
 Protract my lingering life. I pity now,
 And now I hate, myself : I weep, and rave,
 And weep again. This, this is the incessant,
 Insufferable, fierce vicissitude,
 In which I drag along my heavy days.—
 But what ? . . . Do you too at my horrid state
 Shed tears ? . . . Beloved mother ! . . . Let me then, . . .
 To thy breast clinging, . . . drinking in thy tears, . . .
 Forego the sense of suffering for a moment ! . . .

Ce. Beloved daughter, at a tale like this,
 Who could refrain from weeping ? . . .

Cin. At her words
 I feel my bosom rent . . . But finally,
 What ought we now to do ? . . .

My. But finally,
 (Ah ! trust to what I say) I ne'er conceived
 The wish to afflict you, or to extort from you
 Vain pity for myself, describing thus,
 Or trying to describe what mocks description,
 My fierce unutterable pangs.—When I,

By chusing Pereus, had fix'd my fate,
 At first, 'tis true, I to myself appear'd
 Somewhat less troubled ; but within my heart
 Proportionably fierce my grief return'd,
 As nearer and moré near the day approach'd
 For forming the indissoluble tie.
 So much so, that three times indeed I dared
 To beg you to procrastinate the day.
 In these delays I somewhat calm'd myself ;
 But, as the time diminish'd, all my pangs
 Resumed their wonted fierceness. To their height,
 To my consummate shame, consummate grief,
 Are they to-day arrived : but something tells me
 That they, to-day, are giving in my breast,
 The last proof of their strength. This day shall see
 me

Consort to Pereus, or . . . a breathless corse.—

Ce. What do I hear ? . . . Oh daughter ! . . . Wilt
 thou thus

In these lugubrious nuptials persevere ? . . .

Cin. No, this shall never be. Thou lov'st not Pe-
 reus ;

And, spite of inclination, thou, in vain,
 Would'st give thyself to him.

My. Ah, do not ye
 Take me from him ; or quickly give me death . . .
 'Tis true, perhaps, I love him not as much
 As he loves me ; . . . and yet, of this I doubt . . .
 Believe, that I sufficiently esteem him ;
 And that no other man in all the world,
 If he have not, shall have my hand. I hope
 That Pereus, one day, as he ought to be,
 Will to my heart be dear ; living with him

In constant and inseparable faith,
 I hope that, by his means, peace will return,
 Joy will return to me ; that life may be
 Still dear to me, and peradventure happy.
 Ah ! if I hitherto have loved him not
 As he deserves, 'tis not a fault of mine,
 But rather of my state ; which makes me first
 Abhor myself . . . Him have I chosen once :
 And now again I chuse him : wish for him,
 Solicit him, and him alone. My choice
 Beyond expression to yourselves was grateful :
 Be then, as ye will'd, and as now I will,
 The whole accomplish'd. Do ye try to rise
 Above your daughter's grief too, since that daughter
 Who suffers it, rises above that grief.
 I will, ere long, as much as in me lies,
 Come to these nuptials cheerfully ; and ye,
 Perchance, will hold yourselves indebted to them
 For days of future peace.

Ce. Oh matchless daughter !

How many rare perfections thou unitest !

Cin. Thy words a little calm me ; but I tremble . . .

My. I feel, while thus in conference with you,
 My strength return. I may again perchance
 Wholly become the mistress of myself,
 If the gods will, provided ye will lend
 Me your assistance.

Cin. What assistance ?

Ce. Speak !

We will do every thing.

My. I am constrain'd

Once more to grieve you. Hear.—To my worn
 breast,

And to my troubled, weak, distemper'd mind,
 The sight of objects new to me will prove
 A potent remedy ; and this will be
 Effectual in proportion as 'tis speedy.
 What it will cost me to abandon you,
 Oh heaven ! I cannot say ; my tears will tell it,
 When I give you the terrible farewell :
 If without falling lifeless . . . in thy arms,
 I can, . . . oh mother, . . . do it . . . But, if yet
 I can abandon you, the day will come,
 When, to this generous effort, I shall owe
 Life, peace, and happiness.

Ce. Dost thou thus speak
 Of leaving us ? Would'st do it instantly ?
 At once dost fear and wish to do it ? Whence
 Such inconsistency ? . . .

Cin. T' abandon us ? . . .
 And what remains to us deprived of thee ?
 Thou may'st at leisure afterwards depart
 To Pereus' father ; but meanwhile ere this
 With us enjoy protracted happiness . . .

My. But if 'tis now impossible for me
 Here to be happy, would ye rather see me
 In Cyprus dead, than, from a foreign shore,
 Hear tidings of my full felicity ?—
 Sooner, or later, to Epirus' realm
 My destiny invites me : there should I
 With Pereus finally abide. To you,
 When Pereus the paternal sceptre sways,
 One day will we return. Ye shall again
 In Cyprus see me, if the gods so grant,
 The joyful mother of a numerous offspring :
 And we will leave to you, of all our children

The one which ye love best, to be the prop
 Of your declining years. 'Thus of your blood
 Shall ye possess an heir to this rich realm ;
 Since offspring of the stronger sex, the gods
 Have hitherto denied to you. Then first,
 The day on which ye suffer'd me to go,
 Will ye commemorate with blessings.—Ah,
 Grant that to-morrow Percus and I
 Spread to the wind our sails. Within my heart
 I feel a certain and tremendous presage,
 That I, if ye prohibit my departure,
 Alas ! within this inauspicious palace,
 Remain to-day th' inevitable victim
 Of an inscrutable and unknown power :
 That ye will lose me everlastingly . . .
 Do you, I pray, compassionately yield
 To my fantastic presage ; or be pleased,
 Indulging my distemper'd phantasy,
 To second what perchance ye deem an error.
 My life, my destiny, and also (Heavens !
 I shudder as I speak) your destiny,
 All, all, too much depend on my departure.

Ce. Oh daughter ! . . .

Cm. Ah ! . . . thy accents make me tremble . . .
 But yet, if such thy will, so be it done.
 Whate'er may be my grief, I would prefer
 Never to see thee, than to see thee thus.—
 And thou, sweet consort, mute, and motionless,
 In tears ? . . . Consentest thou to her desire ?

Ce. Ah ! could her absence kill me, as (alas !)
 I feel assured that I shall hence be doomed
 To languish in immitigable tears ! . . .
 Ah ! might the augury one day prove true

Which she suggested of her precious offspring ; . . .
 But yet, since such is her fantastic wish,
 So that she live, let it be gratified.

My. Beloved mother, now thou givest me
 Life for the second time.—Within an hour
 Shall I be ready for the nuptial rites.—
 Whether I love you, time will prove to you ;
 Though now I seem impatient to forsake you.—
 Now, for a little while, do I retire
 To my apartments : fain would I appear
 With tearless eyes before the sacred altar ;
 And worthy of acceptance, and approved,
 With brow serene my noble consort meet.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Cinyras, Ceccris.

Ce. Unhappy that we are ! . . . Unhappy daughter ! . . .

Cin. Yet to behold her every day more sad,
 My heart hath not the firmness. 'Twere in vain
 To oppose ourselves . . .

Ce. Oh spouse ! . . . A thousand fears
 Invade my heart, lest her excess of grief,
 When she is gone from hence, should cause her
 death.

Cin. From her expressions, from her looks, and
 gestures,
 And also from her sighs, it seems to me
 That by some superhuman agency
 She's fearfully possess'd.

Ce. . . . Ah ! well I know,
 Implacable, vindictive Venus, well.

Thy rigorous revenge. Thus dost thou make me
 Atone for my irreverent arrogance.
 But ah! my child was innocent; I only
 Was the delinquent; I alone the culprit...

Cin. Oh heaven! what hast thou dared against the
 goddess?...

Ce. Unhappy me!... Oh Cinyras, hear my fault;
 When I beheld myself the spouse adored
 Of the most winning and attaching husband,
 A man for captivating grace unequal'd,
 And by him mother of an only daughter,
 (For beauty, modesty, and sense, and grace
 Throughout the world unrivall'd) I confess,
 Intoxicate with my distinguish'd lot,
 I dared deny to Venus, I alone,
 Her tributary incense.—Would'st thou more?
 Insensate, and extravagant, at last
 To such a pitch (alas infatuate!)
 Of madness I arrived, that from my lips
 I suffer'd the imprudent vaunt to escape,
 That by the illustrious, celebrated beauty
 Of Myrrha, now more votaries were drawn
 From Asia and from Greece, than heretofore
 Were e'er attracted to her sacred isle
 By warm devotion to the Cyprian queen.

Cin. Oh! what is this thou sayest?...

Ce. From that day
 Henceforward, Myrrha lost her peace; her life,
 Her beauty, like trail wax before the fire,
 Slowly consumed; and nothing in our hands
 From that time seem'd to prosper. Afterwards
 What did I not attempt to appease the goddess?
 What prayers, what tears, what penitential rites

Have I not lavish'd?—Evermore in vain!—

Cin. Ill hast thou done, oh lady; and still worse
Hath been thy guilt, in keeping it from me.

A father wholly innocent, perchance,
I might by means of mediatorial rites
The pardon of the goddess impetrate:
And yet perchance (I hope) I may succeed.—

But meanwhile, now indèed do I concur

In Myrrha's judgment, that of force we must,

And with what promptitude we can effect it,

Remove her from this desecrated isle.

Who knows? Perchance the anger of the goddess

Will not to other climes pursue her? *Hence*

Our wretched daughter feeling in her breast

Such an imperative and unknown presage,

Perhaps *hence* alone, so much desires to go,

And builds on this departure such warm hopes.—

But *Pereus* comes; welcome he comes: he only,

By taking her away from us, can now

For us our daughter save.

Ce. Oh destiny!

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Cinyras, Percus, Cecris.

Pe. Tardy, irresolute, and apprehensive,
And full of mortal wretchedness, ye see me.

A bitter conflict lacerates my heart:

Me, pity, and disinterested love

Of others, have subdued. This sacrifice

Will cost my life. No otherwise this grieves me

Than that I thus have forfeited the power

To spend it in your service: but I will not,

N^o, I will never drag t'untimely death
 My adored Myrrha! The disastrous tie
 Sha. now be torn asunder; and with that
 The thread of my existence.

Cin . . . Oh my son! . . .
 Yet by this name I call thee; and I hope
 That thou ere long more than in Hamo will be so.
 We, since thyself, have heard explicitly
 The secret thoughts of Myrrha: I have taken,
 As a true father, every means with her,
 To encourage her with absolute free will
 Her own unbiass'd judgment to pursue.
 But 'mid the winds the rock is not more firm,
 Than she is firm to thee: thee, thee, alone
 She wills, and she solicits; and she fears
 Lest thou be taken from her. She knows not
 Herself how to adduce to us a cause
 For her despondency: her infirm health,
 Which was at first the effect of this, perchance
 Is now its only cause. But her deep grief
 Deserves much pity, be it what it may;
 Nor should she wake in thee, more than in us,
 Any dissatisfaction. A sweet solace
 Thou wilt be of her ills: on thy firm love
 Her hopes are founded all. What stronger proof
 Would'st thou require than this? She will herself
 At all events abandon us to-morrow;
 (Us, who so dearly love her) and for this
 Th' assign'd inducement is to be with thee
 More uniformly; to become more thine.

Pe. Ah, could I trust to this? but 'specially
 This her abrupt departure . . . Ah, I tremble,
 Lest she designs in secret to make me

Th' instrument of her death.

Ce. Pereus, to thee
Do we confide her : fate to-day decrees it.
Too certainly before our very eyes
Here would she fall extinct, if to her will
Our hearts permitted us to persevere
In opposition. Change of place and scene
Potently operates on youthful minds.
Then lay aside all inauspicious thoughts ;
And think alone of making her more happy.
Bring to thy countenance its wonted cheer ;
And by avoiding mention of her grief,
Soon wilt thou see that grief itself subside.

Pe. May I believe then, certainly believe,
That Myrrha hates me not ?

Cin. From me thou may'st
Believe it, yes ! What heretofore I said
Remember ! by her words I'm now convinced,
That far from being the source of her distress,
She deems these nuptials her sole remedy.
She must be treated with indulgence ; thus
She will submit to any thing. Go thou ;
Quickly prepare thyself for festive pomp ;
And at the same time every thing dispose
For taking from us by to-morrow's dawn
Our only daughter. We will not assemble
Before the altar of the public temple
In sight of all the inhabitants of Cyprus ;
For the long rite would be an obstacle
To your abrupt departure. We will chaunt
The hymeneal anthems in this palace.

Pe. Thou hast restored me suddenly to life.
I fly ; and here will instantly return.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Euryclea, Myrrha.

My. Yes, Euryclea, thou beholdest me
 'Completely tranquillized; and almost joyous,
 At my resolved departure.

Eu. Can this be? . . .
 Alone with Pereus wilt thou hence depart? . . .
 Nor of so many of thy faithful hand-maids
 Wilt thou select even one? Not even me
 Wilt thou distinguish from this wide neglect? . . .
 What will become of me, my dearest child,
 If thou abandon me? alas, I feel
 Ready to die at the mere thought of this . . .

My. Ah! hold thy peace . . . One day I shall re-
 turn . . .

Eu. Ah! may the Heavens grant this! Beloved
 daughter! . . .
 I did not think that thou wert capable
 Of such a stern resolve: I always hoped
 That thou at last would'st close my dying eyes . . .

My. I should have chosen thee, and thee alone,
 If I, by any means, could have resolved
 To take an inmate of this palace with me . . .
 But against this am I inflexible . . .

Eu. And at to-morrow's dawn thou go'st from
 hence? . . .

My. I from my parents have at length obtain'd
 Permission to do this; the rising sun
 Will see our vessel wafted from this shore.

Eu. Auspicious be the day to thee! . . . Could I
Know thou wert really happy! . . . 'Tis in truth
A cruel and a mortifying joy,
That thou dost manifest in leaving us . . .
Yet, if it please thee, I will weep, though mute,
With thy afflicted mother . . .

My. Wherefore thus
My heart already too assailable
Dost thou assail? Why force me thus to weep? . . .

Eu. Oh! how can I suppress my bursting tears . .
This is the last time that I shall behold,
And shall embrace thee. Thou forsakest me
With many years bow'd down, and still more bow'd
With wretchedness. I shall be in my grave
At thy return, if that should ever be:
Some tears, I hope that, . . . thou at least wilt give . .
To the remembrance . . . of thy Euryclea . . .

My. For pity's sake . . . oh! . . . quit me; . . . or at
least

Be silent.—I command thee, hold thy peace.
It is my duty now to be to all
Inflexible; and chiefly to myself.—
This is a day sacred to nuptial joy.
Oh, if thou e'er hast loved me, I require
Of thee to-day the last hard proof of this;
Restrain thy tears, . . . and mine.—I see already
My consort coming.—Let all grief be mute.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Percus, Myrrha, Euryclea.

Pe. Thy father, Myrrha, hath transported me
With unexpected joy & my destiny,

As I expected trembling, he himself
 cheerfully announced to me as happy.
 You wilt have it so, by morrow's dawn,
 At thy command, my sails shall be unfurl'd.
 It pleases me at least, thy parents yield
 Contentedly and placidly to this:
 For me no other pleasure there can be
 Than that of satisfying thy desires.
My. Yes, much-loved consort; for by this fond
 name

Already I accost thee; if a wish
 My bosom ever fervently inspired,
 Now do I wish intensely, nay I will,
 To-morrow, at the break of day, to part
 From hence with thee. To find myself at once
 With thee alone; no longer to behold
 One of the many objects in my sight
 So long the witnesses, and perhaps the cause,
 Of my distress; to sail in unknown seas;
 To land in countries hitherto unseen;
 To breathe a fresh invigorating air;
 And evermore to witness at my side,
 Beaming with exultation, and with love,
 A spouse like thee; all this, I am convinced,
 Will renovate me soon a second time
 To be what once I was. Less irksome, then,
 I trust that I shall be to thee. Meanwhile
 My state will stand in need of some indulgence;
 But, be assured that this will not last long.
 My grief, if never to my mind recall'd,
 Will be eradicated soon. Do thou,
 At my abandon'd and paternal realm,
 At my disconsolate and childless parents,

In short, of nothing, that was once my own,
 Once precious to my heart, ever remind me,
 Nor even breathe to me their thrilling names.
 This, this will be the only remedy
 That will for ever staunch the bitter fount
 Of my perpetual and horrible tears.

Pe. Strange and unparallel'd is thy design,
 Oh Myrrha : ah may heaven in mercy grant
 That thou may'st not, when 'tis too late, repent it !
 Yet though my heart the flattering thought admits
 not

Of being dear to thee, I am resolved
 Blindly t' accomplish every wish of thine.
 Provided that my destiny decree
 That I should ne'er be worthy of thy love,
 My life, which only for thy sake I keep,
 (That life which I had sacrificed already
 With my own hand, if I had been to-day
 Forced to relinquish thee) this life of mine,
 Since for this sacred purpose thou hast deign'd
 To make a choice of me, I consecrate
 For ever to thy grief.—To weep with thee,
 If thou desire it ; with festivity,
 And mirthful sports, to make the time pass by
 With lighter wings, and cheat thee of thy cares ;
 With strenuous watchfulness, t' anticipate
 All thy desires ; to shew myself at all times,
 Whichever most thou wishest me to be,
 Consort, protector, brother, friend, or servant ;
 Behold, to what I pledge myself : in this,
 And this alone, my glory and my life
 Will all be centred. Yet, by this unmoved,
 If thou canst never love me, still, methinks,

I cannot be the object of thy hate.

My. What say'st thou? Learn, ah learn better to know,

Better to appreciate thyself and Myrrha!

To thy so various endowments, thou

Addest such boundless love, that thou deservest

A far, far different object to myself.

Love in my bosom will enshrine his fires,

When he has clear'd it of its blighting tears.

And oh, to-day, be pleased to accept it, thou,

An ample and indubitable proof

Of this, that I select thyself alone

As with medicinable power endow'd

To heal my bosom's festering malady;

That I esteem thee, that with lofty voice

I hail thee as my only true deliverer.

Pe. Thou dost inflame me with excessive joy:

Never till now did accents sweet as these

Flow from thy beauteous lips: within my heart

Engraved in characters of fire they live.—

Behold the priests, and the hymeneal train,

And our dear parents, hitherward advance.

Ah! may this moment be to thee propitious,

As it hath been the brightest of my life.

SCENE THE THIRD.

*Priests, Chorus of Children, Virgins, and old Men,
Cinyras, Cecris, People, Myrrha, Pereus, Euryclea.*

Cin. Beloved children, I infer, at least,

A joyful augury from seeing you

Precede us thus to the hymeneal rite.

On thy face Pereus transport is express'd;

And I behold my daughter's countenance
 Serene and resolute. The immortal gods
 With looks benign assuredly regard us.
 With copious incense be the altars heap'd ;
 While the full choir with pealing harmony
 Propitiates the gods, and to the skies
 Breathed acceptably forth from hearts devout
 Our loud, and long resounding hymns ascend.

CHORUS.

Hymen, benignant god, brother of Love,
 Of frail humanity the soothing friend,
 On us propitiously do thou descend ;—
 And bid henceforth these happy votaries prove
 A flame so pure from thy inspiring breath,
 That nothing may extinguish it but death.

CHILDREN.

Come to us, Hymen, with triumphant joy,
 Borne on thy brother's wings descend below ;

VIRGINS.

With his own craft deceive the treacherous boy
 Both of his darts, his quiver, and his bow.

OLD MEN.

But do thou come exempt from all his arts,
 His soft caprices, and insidious sighs :

CHORUS.

And deign, oh Hymen, to unite two hearts,
 In mutual love unmatch'd, with thy firm ties.

Eu. Daughter, what ails thee? How thou tremblest? ... Ah ...

M. Peace ... peace ...

Eu. But yet ...

My. No, no; ... I do not tremble.

CHORUS. . .

Mother sublime of Hymen, and of Love,
A goddess e'en among the gods art thou;
Whose high supremacy in heaven above,
Or in the earth, none dare to disavow;
From old Olympus' heights, oh Venus, deign
Upon this pair propitiously to smile;
If e'er the rites of this thy sacred isle
Thy kind protection haply might obtain.

CHILDREN. .

Those peerless charms from thee derive their birth,
Bestow'd on Myrrha with such lavish wealth;

VIRGINS.

Restoring her once more to joy and health,
Be pleased to leave thy image on the earth;

OLD MEN.

Lastly, make her the mother of a race
So noble, that their father may confess,
Grandsires, and subjects, that past wretchedness
Is all forgotten in their matchless grace.

CHORUS. .

Benignant goddess, gloriously unfold,
From the pure empyrean's azure height,—

Drawn by thy swans with plumes of downy white,
Throned in thy chariot of translucent gold,—
Thy form majestical:—and by thy side,

Conduct thy son:—thy veil of roseate bloom—

Cast o'er thy votaries,—pregnant with perfume;—
And let one spirit o'er two forms preside.—

Ce. Yes, daughter, yes, with meek subserviency
Thou always soughtest to secure the favour
Of our all-powerful goddess . . . But, alas! . . .

Thy countenance changes? . . . Thou art faint, and
trembling? . . .

And scarce thy faltering knees . . .

My. For pity's sake,
Do not, oh mother, with thy accents bring
My constancy to too severe a test.
I cannot answer for my countenance; . . .
But this I know, the purpose of my heart
Is steady and immutable.

Eu. For her
I feel as if my very life would fail.

Pe. Ah! more and more her countenance is trou-
bled? . . .

Whence is this tremor which assaults my frame?—

CHORUS.

Pure faith, and concord lasting and benign,
Have in the bosom of this lofty pair
Irrevocably placed their sacred shrine;
And fell ~~Alto~~ would in vain repair
To trouble with her torch's lurid glare
The lovely bride's firm and unswerving heart;
And deadly ~~Discord~~, frantic with despair,

Himself consumes, and curses his weak art,
And om the noble pair all powers malign depart.

My. What is it that ye say? My heart already
By all the baneful furies is assaulted.

See them; the rabid sisters round me glare
With sable torches, and with snaky scourge;
Behold such torches as this Hymen merits...

Cin. Oh heaven! what do I hear?

Ce. My child, thou ravest...

Pe. Oh fatal rites! ye ne'er shall be perform'd...

My. But what? The hymns have ceased?... Who
to his breast

Thus clasps me? Where am I? What have I said?
Am I a spouse already?...

Pe. Thou art not,

Myrrha, espoused; nor shalt thou ever be

The spouse of Pereus, to thee I swear.

Not less intense, but different to thine,

The execrable furies tear my heart.

Thou hast made me a derision to the world,

And to myself, e'en more than I'm to thee,

An object of abhorrence: I for this

Will not make thee unhappy. Thou hast now,

Though 'gainst thy will, fully betray'd thyself:

And thou hast finally beyond all doubt

Divulged the invincible and long aversion

Which thou hast cherish'd towards me. We are
happy,

That thou hast thus betray'd thyself in time.

Now from the self-imposed and hated yoke

Art thou released for ever. Safe art thou,

And from all ties exempt. Henceforth will I

Remove for ever from thy troubled sight
 My odious presence . . . Satisfied, and happy,
 Thou by my means shalt be . . . and thou art lo g
 Shalt learn the last resource that did remain ~
 For one, who, hoping to obtain thee, lost thee.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

*Cinyras, Myrrha, Cecris, Euryclea, Priests, Chorus,
 People.*

Cin. The rite is now profaned; hence, hence this
 pomp,
 This ineffectual pomp: let the hymns cease.
 Meanwhile, oh priests, withdraw elsewhere.—I will,
 (A wretched father) weep at least unseen.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Cinyras, Myrrha, Cecris, Euryclea.

Eu. Ah! far more dead than living Myrrha stands:
 Behold, I scarcely can support her form.
 Oh daughter!

Cin. Ladies, leave her to herself
 A prey, and to her own flagitious furies.
 She, with her unexampled waywardness,
 Spite of myself, at last hath render'd me
 Inflexible and cruel: for her state
 No more I feel compassion." She herself,
 Almost against the wishes of her parents,
 Would to the altar come: and this alone
 To o'erwhelm us with her own disgrace and ours? . . .
 Thou too compassionate, deluded mother,
 Leave her: if hitherto we were not stern,

The day at length is come to be so.

My. Yes.

'Tis 's it should be: Cinyras, be thou
With me inexorable: for nought else
I wish; nought else I will. He, he alone
Can terminate all the disquietudes
Of an unhappy and unworthy daughter.—
That which is now dependent at thy side...
That vengeful sword... plunge it within my breast...
Thou gav'st to me this wretched hated life,
'Take thou it from me: lo! the last, last gift
For which I supplicate thee... Ah, reflect,
That if thyself, and with thy own right hand,
Do not destroy me, thou reservest me...
... And for nought else... to perish by my own.

Cin. O daughter!...

Ce. Oh unutterable anguish!

Ah! thou'rt a father; thou a father art;...
Wherefore exasperate her?... Is she not
Sufficiently afflicted?... Thou seest clearly
That she is scarce the mistress of herself;
Her reason sinks beneath her mighty anguish...

Eu. Oh Myrrha... daughter... dost thou hear
me not?

My tears... prevent... my utterance,...

Cin. Oh state!...

By such a terrible sight I am o'ercome...
Ah yes, I am e'en yet too much a father:
And of all fathers most unfortunate...
Already by compassion more than rage
Am I possess'd. I will betake myself
Elsewhere to weep. Watch ye meanwhile o'er her.—

When she has regain'd her reason, speedily,
She afterwards must hear her father speak.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Cecris, Myrrha, Euryclea.

Eu. Ah see, 'once more her senses she resumes . . .

Ce. Leave me alone with her, good Euryclea;
I would speak to her.

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

Cecris, Myrrha.

My. Is my father gone? . . .
He then, he will not kill me? Ah, do thou
In pity, mother, give to me a sword;
Ah yes, if there indeed remains in thee
The shadow of regard for me, a sword,
Give me thyself without delay. I am
In full possession of my faculties;
And well I know the mighty consequence
Of this my fervent prayer: ah trust for once
My judgment; trust it while there yet is time:
Thou wilt repent hereafter, but in vain,
If thou to-day grantest me not a sword.

Ce. Beloved child, . . . oh heaven! . . . assuredly
From grief thou ravest.—From thy mother thou
Would'st never ask a sword! . . .—Now, let us speak
No more of nuptial rites: a strength of mind
Not to be parallel'd, hath led thee on
To accomplish what thou promisedst; but, ah!
Stronger than thou was nature: fervently
For this I thank the gods. Thou e'er shalt be

Clasp'd in the arms of thy indulgent mother :
 And if to eternal tears thou'rt self-condemn'd,
 I will weep also evermore with thee,
 Nor ver, even for an instant, leave thee :
 We will be one in all things ; e'en thy grief,
 Since it will not abandon thee, will I
 Appropriate to myself. And thou shalt find
 In me a sister, rather than a mother . . .
 But what, oh heaven, is this ? . . . Beloved child, .
 Art thou incens'd 'gainst me ? . . . repell'st me ? .
 Refusest to embrace me ? . . . and dost dart
 Indignant and exasperated looks . . .
 Alas ! . . . oh daughter, . . . e'en towards thy mother ? .

My. Ah ! too much it increases my despair,
 Even the seeing thee : thou, more and more,
 Rendest my heart when thou embracest me . . .
 Alas ! . . . what do I say ? . . . Beloved mother ! . . .
 A vile, flagitious, and unworthy daughter
 Am I, who love deserve not. Leave thou me
 To my dire destiny ; or if thou feel
 For me true pity, I repeat it to thee,
 Kill me.—

Ce. Ah, rather I should kill myself,
 If I were doom'd to lose thee : cruel daughter !
 Canst thou speak to me, and repeat to me
 So horrible a wish ?—Rather, will I
 From this hour forth perpetually watch
 Over thy life.

My. Thou, thou o'er my life watch ?
 Must I, at every instant, I, behold thee ?
 Thou evermore before my eyes ? Ah first,
 I will that these same eyes of mine be closed
 In everlasting darkness : I myself

With these my very hands' would pluck them first
From my own forehead . . .

Ce. What say'st thou? . . . oh heaven! . . .
Thou mak'st me shudder. Then thou hatest me? . . .

My. Thou first, thou sole, fatal, eternal cause
Of all my wretchedness . . .

Ce. What words are these? . . .
Oh daughter! . . . I the cause? . . . But see thy tears
Gush forth in torrents . . .

My. Pardon, pardon me! . . .
It is not I that speak; an unknown power
Rules my distemper'd organs . . . Dearest mother!
Too much thou lovest me; and I . . .

Ce. Dost thou
Deem me the cause?

My. Yes, thou, alas! hast been
In giving life to such an impious wretch
The cause of all my woes; and art so still,
If thou refusest now to take it from me;
Now that I importune thee for this deed
So fervently. There yet is time for this;
Yet I am innocent . . . almost . . . —But oh!
Against such agonies . . . my languid frame . . .
No more bears up . . . —My strength, . . . my senses
fail . . .

Ce. To thy apartments suffer me to lead thee.
Thou need'st some cordial to restore thy strength.
This transient frenzy, trust me, hath arisen
From too long fasting. Ah, come thou; in me
Fully confide; I, I alone will serve thee.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cinyras.

Cin. Oh, ill-starr'd, wretched Peneus ! Too true lover ! . . .

Ah, had I been more swift in my arrival,
 Thou hadst not then perchance against thy breast
 The fatal weapon aim'd.—When he knows this,
 What will become of his disconsolate father ?
 Espoused and joyful he expected him ;
 Now will he see him brought before his eyes,
 Slain by his own hands, an inanimate corse.—
 But I, alas ! am I then less than he
 Disconsolate as a father ? And is this life,
 This state, in which, amid atrocious furies,
 The frantic Myrrha languishes ? This life,
 To which we're doom'd by her mysterious pangs ?—
 Yet will I question her ; and I have arm'd
 My heart in iron mail. She well deserves
 (And this she knows) my anger ; as a proof
 She tardily obeys my summons hither :
 Yet my command hath she already heard
 By the third messenger.—Assuredly
 Beneath these pangs of her's there is conceal'd
 Some mystery no less dreadful than important.
 I, from her lips, will now hear all the truth,
 Or never, never more will I henceforth
 Admit her to my presence . . . But, oh heaven,
 If she's condemn'd to everlasting tears,
 Though innocent, by force of destiny,

And by the anger of offended gods,
 Should I to such calamities as these
 Add the displeasure of a father? . . . Should I,
 Despairing, and despised, abandon her
 To lingering death? . . . Alas, at such a thought
 My heart would break . . . But, yet, in part, at least,
 'Tis indispensable that I should hide,
 From her, in this my last experiment,
 My boundless fondness. Never hath she yet
 Heard me address her in reproachful terms:
 No maiden surely hath a heart so firm
 As may suffice to hear without emotion
 The unaccustom'd menace of a father.—
 At length she comes.—Alas, how she approaches
 With tardy and reluctant steps! It seems
 As if she came to expire before my eyes.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Cinyras, Myrrha.

Cin. —Myrrha, I never, never could have thought
 That thou regardedst not thy father's honour;
 Thou hast too certainly of this convinced me
 On this day fatal to us all: but yet
 That thou should'st now reluctantly obey
 Th' express repeated summons of thy father,
 E'en this was less expected than the other.

My. . . . Thou of my life art arbiter supreme . . .
 I did implore from thee . . . myself . . . erewhile . . .
 And on this very spot, . . . the punishment . . .
 Of my so many, . . . and enormous faults . . .
 In the presence of my mother; . . . wherefore then
 Didst thou not kill me? . . .

Cin. It is time, oh Myrrha,
 Yes it is time to alter thy deportment.
 In vain thou utterest accents of despair;
 In vain despairing, and confounded looks
 Thou fixest on the ground. Through all thy grief
 Alas, too evidently shame appears;
 Guilty thou feel'st thyself. Thy heaviest fault
 Is thy concealment with thy father: hence
 His anger thoroughly thou meritest;
 And that the partial and indulgent love
 I bore to thee, my dear and only daughter,
 Henceforth should cease.—But what? thy tears gush
 forth!

Thou tremblest! shudderest! . . . and thou art silent!
 Would then thy father's anger be to thee
 An insupportable infliction?

My. Ah! . . .

Worse, . . . than the worst of deaths . . .

Cin. Hear me.—Thou hast
 Render'd thy parents, as thou hast thyself,
 A fable to the world, by th' untoward issue
 To which thou'st brought these rites desired by thee.
 Thy cruel insult has cut short already
 The days of wretched Pereus . . .

My. What do I hear?

Cin. Yes, Pereus dies; and thou hast murder'd
 him.

Soon as he left our presence, he withdrew,
 Alone, and by mute anguish overwhelm'd,
 To his apartments: no man durst pursue him;
 And I arrived too late . . . He lay, transfix'd
 By his own dagger, in a sea of blood:
 To me, his eyes bedimm'd with tears, and death,

He raised ; . . . and, 'mid his latest sighs, he breathed
The name of Myrrha from his lips.—Ungrateful . . .

My. Ah, say no more to me . . . I, I alone
Deserve to breathe my last . . . And yet I live ? . . .

Cin. The horrid anguish of the wretched sire
Of Perceus, I alone can comprehend,
I who at once am wretched and a father :
Hence I'm aware what now must be his rage,
His hatred, and his thirst to wreak on us
A just and bitter vengeance.—Hence, not moved
By terror of his arms, but by a just
Compassion for his son, I am resolved
To know from thee, as doth befit a father
Offended and deceived, (and at all risks
Do I insist on this) the real cause
Of such a horrible catastrophe —
Myrrha, in vain would'st thou conceal it from me :
Thou by thy each least gesture art betray'd.—
Thy broken words ; the changes of thy face,
Now dyed with scarlet, and with hues of death
Now blanch'd ; thy mute and bosom-heaving sighs ;
The lingering hectic that consumes thy frame ;
Thy restless glances stol'n and indirect ;
Thy dumb confusion ; and the cleaving shame,
Th' instinctive consciousness that ne'er forsakes
thee : . . .

Ah ! all that I behold in thee persuades me,
And ineffectually would'st thou deny it,
That these thy furies are th' effects of love.

My. Of love ? . . . Ah, think it not ! . . . Thou art
deceived.

Cin. The more that thou deniest it, the more

I am convinced of this. *And I, alas!
 Am but too well assured, that this thy flame,
 Which thou so pertinaciously dost hide,
 To some degrading object owes its birth.

My. Alas! . . . why thus deliberate? . . . Thou wilt
 not
 Destroy me with thy sword; . . . and thou mean-
 while . . .

Destroyest me with words . . .

Cin. And darest thou
 Assert to me that thou'rt untouch'd by love?
 And should'st thou say it to me, and e'en dare
 Also to swear it, I should deem thee perjured.—
 And who is ever worthy of thy heart,
 If Pereus, true, incomparable lover,
 Could not indeed obtain it?—But so fierce
 Are thy emotions; . . . such thy agitation;
 So conscious and so passionate thy shame;
 And in such terrible vicissitudes
 The conflict of these passions is engraved
 Upon thy countenance, that all in vain
 Thy lips deny the charge . . .

My. Ah, would'st thou then . . .
 E'en in thy presence . . . make me . . . die . . . of
 shame? . . .

And thou art a father? . . .

Cin. And would'st thou with cruel,
 Inflexible, and unavailing silence,
 Poison, and prematurely terminate
 The days of a fond father who loves thee
 Far better than himself—I'm yet a father;
 Banish thy fear; whatever be thy love,
 (So that I once might see thee happy) I,

If thou confess it to me, for thy sake,
Am capable of any sacrifice.
I have seen, and I still see (wretched daughter)
The struggle generous and horrible
Which tears thy heart to pieces betwixt love
And duty. Thou hast done too much already,
To sense of right self-sacrificed, but love,
More powerful than thyself, forbids the offering.
Passion may be excused ; its impulses
Oft foil our best endeavours to resist them ;
But to withhold thy secret from thy father,
Who prays for, who commands, thy confidence,
Admits of no excuse.

My. —Oh death ! oh death !
Whom I so much invoke, wilt thou still be
Deaf to my grief? . . .

Cin. Ah daughter, try to calm,
Ah try to calm thy heart : if thou wilt not
Make me hereafter more incensed against thee,
I am already almost pacified ;
Provided thou wilt speak to me.—Ah speak
To me, as to a brother. Even I
Love by experience know : . . . The name . . .

My. Oh heaven ! . . .
I love, yes ; since thou forcest me to say it ;
I desperately love, and love in vain.
But who's the object of that hopeless passion,
Nor thou, nor any one, shall ever know :
He knows it not himself . . . and even I
To my own consciousness almost deny
The fatal secret.

Cin. And I will, and ought

To wrest it from thy keeping. Nor canst thou
 Be cruel to thyself, except thou be
 At 'he same time still more so to thy parents,
 Who thee adore, thee only.—Speak, ah speak.—
 Thou seest already from an angry father
 That I become a weeping, kneeling suppliant :
 Thou canst not die without condemning us
 To share thy tomb.—He, whosoe'er he be,
 Whom thou dost love, I will that he be thine.
 A monarch's foolish pride can never tear
 The affection of a father from my breast.
 Thy love, thy hand, my realm, may well convert
 The lowest individual to a rank
 Lofty and noble : and I feel assured
 That he whom thou couldest love, could never be
 Wholly unworthy, though of humble birth.
 I do conjure thee, speak : at all events,
 I wish thee saved.

My. Saved ? . . . Of what dost thou dream ? . . .
 These very words accelerate my death . . .
 Let me, for pity's sake, ah let me quickly
 For ever . . drag myself . . from thee . . .

Cin. Oh daughter
 Sole, and beloved ; "Oh what say'st thou ? Ah !
 Come to thy father's arms.—Oh heaven ! Like one
 Distract, and frantic, thou repellst me ?
 Thou then dost hate thy father ? and dost thou
 Burn with so vile a passion that thou fearest . . .

My. Ah no, it is not vile ; . . my flame is guilty ;
 Nor ever . .

Cin. What is this thou sayest ? . . Guilty ?
 Provided that thy sire condemn it not,

It cannot be : reveal it.

My. Thou would'st see
Even that sire himself with horror shudder,
If it were known to . . . *Cinyras* . . .

Cin. What do I hear ?

My. What have I said ? . . . Alas ! . . .
I know not what I say . . . I do not love . . .
Ah, think it not ; oh no ! . . . Ah, suffer me,
I for the last time fervently conjure thee
To hasten from thy presence.

Cin. Hard of heart ! . . .

Now, by exasperating thus my rage
With thy fantastic moods, by trifling thus
With my excessive grief, eternally
Now hast thou forfeited thy father's love.

My. Oh cruel, bitter, and ferocious menace ! . .
Now in the anguish of my dying gasp,
Swiftly approaching . . . to my pangs so dire,
So various, and so fierce, will now be added
The cruel execration of a father ! . . .
I shall die far from thee . . . and die unpitied ! . . .
How fortunate my mother ! . . . She, at least,
Press'd in thy arms . . . may breathe . . . her latest
sigh . . .

Cin. What would'st thou say to me ? . . . What
dreadful light
Breaks from these words ! . . . Thou impious, per-
chance . . .

My. Oh heaven ! . . . what have I said indeed ? . . .
Alas !
Oh wretched me ! . . . Where am I ? . . . Whither now
Shall I betake myself ? Where shall I die ? —

But now thy dagger may bestead me! . . .¹

Cin. Daughter! . . .

What hast thou done? My dagger . . .

My. Lo! . . . to thee . . .

I now restore it . . . I at least possess'd

A hand as swift and desperate as my tongue.

Cin. I'm petrified . . . with fear . . . and agony,
With pity . . . and with rage . . .

My. Oh Cinyras! . . .

Thou . . . seest me . . . now . . . expiring . . . in thy presence . . .

I have . . . at once . . . succeeded . . . to avenge

Thee . . . and myself . . . to punish . . . — Thou thyself, . . .

By dint of violence, . . . from my heart . . . didst wrest . . .

The horrid secret . . . But since . . . with my life . . .

It parted . . . from my lips, . . . I die . . . less guilty . . .

Cin. Oh crime! . . . oh agony! — To whom my tears? —

My. Ah, weep not thou; . . . I merit not thy tears . . .

Shun my contagious presence; . . . and conceal, . . .

From Cecris . . . ever . . .

Cin. Wretchedest of fathers! . . .

And does the gaping earth not burst asunder

To swallow me alive? . . . I dare not now

Approach the dying and flagitious damsel; . . .

Yet how can I abandon utterly

My immolated daughter? . . .

¹ She suddenly seizes the dagger of her father, and stabs herself with it.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Cecris, Euryclea, Cinyras, Myrrha.

Ce. By the shrieks
Of death brought hither ..

Cin. Do not thou advance ..
Oh heaven ! ..

Ce. To my daughter's side ..

My. Oh voice ! ..

Eu. Ah spectacle of horror ! On the earth
Myrrha lies weltering in her blood ! ..

Ce. My daughter ! ..

Cen. Stop.

Ce. Murder'd ! .. How ? By whom ? .. I will behold her ..

Cin. Ah stop, .. and hear with terror .. By my dagger

She, with her own hand, has transpierced herself ..

Ce. And dost thou thus desert thy daughter ? .. Ah !
I will myself ..

Cin. She is no more our daughter.
With an incestuous and horrid love
She burn'd for .. Cinyras ..

Ce. What do I hear ?—
Oh crime ! ..

Cin. Ah come ! I pray thee let us go,
To die with agony and shame elsewhere.

Ce. Impious ! ..—Oh daughter !

¹ He runs to meet Cecris, and preventing her from advancing, he intercepts from her the sight of Myrrha dying.

Cin. Ah come!

Ce. Ah unhappy! . .

Nor ever more embrace her! . .

SCENE THE FOURTH.

*Myrrha, Euryclea.**

My. When I ask'd . .

It . . of thee, . . thou, . . oh Euryclea, . . then . .

Shouldest . . have given . . to my hands . . a sword: . .

I had died . . guiltless; . . guilty . . now . . I die!

* She is dragged away by Cinyras.

THE SECOND BRUTUS.

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CÆSAR.

CIMBER.

ANTHONY.

People.

CICERO.

Senators.

BRUTUS.

Conspirators.

CASSIUS.

Lictors.

SCENE,—The Temple of Concord; afterwards the
Curia of Pompey, in Rome.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE THE FIRST.

*Cæsar, Anthony, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Cimber
Senators, all seated.*

Cæ. The dictator of Rome, illustrious fathers,
To an assembly summons you to-day.
'Tis true, that Cæsar seldom hitherto
Hath thus collected you: the cause of this
Alone hath risen from our common foes,
Who would not suffer me to quit my arms
Till I had first discomfited their ranks
With indefatigable promptitude,
E'en from the Betis to Egyptian Nile.
At length 'tis granted to me to enjoy

The privilege, which, more than all things else,
 I coveted, in Rome to avail myself
 Of Roman sense; and having first restored
 Rome to herself, to take advice from you
 Touching her welfare.—She, from civil broils
 At length is respited; and now 'tis time
 That every citizen on Tyber's banks
 Should reassume his rights; and hence I hope
 That envious calumny may cease to rail.
 Rome is not, no, (as lying fame reports,)—
 In any wise impair'd: at her sole name,
 Betwixt the Tagus and Euphrates, 'twixt
 The adust Siena and the ultimate,
 Unknown, sequester'd, hyperborean isle
 Of Albion, at her name all nations tremble.
 And since o'er Crassus he has been victorious,
 Far more the Parthian fears; the Parthian,
 Which at his victory, unlook'd-for, stands
 In blank astonishment, and fearing for it
 Chastisement from yourselves. To consummate
 Rome's glory, nothing else is wanting now
 Except to shew to Parthia and the world,
 That there those Roman soldiers (who required
 A Roman leader by the thirst of conquest,
 And not of gold, impell'd) were only slain,
 And not subdued. To wipe off this disgrace,
 And to conduct to Rome the Parthian king
 In fetters bound, or in the attempt to die,
 I now address myself. To treat maturely
 Of such a war, I have assembled you,
 Here, in this temple of auspicious name:
 May we infer from it a joyful omen;
 Yes, unanimity among us all.

Will be the only and authentic pledge
 Of our success. Wherefore do I exhort
 And counsel you to this. Our country's honour
 Summons us thither with imperious voice,
 Where her unconquer'd eagles have received
 Intolerable insult : and that honour
 Doth for the present absolutely silence
 All lesser impulses of every heart.
 The multitude collected in the forum
 Burns for revenge ; from thence may each of us
 Their imprecations hear ; from us they seek,
 And will perforce obtain it, punishment
 On the presumptuous Parthians. Hence should we
 Waving all other subjects, first resolve
 How best this punishment may be inflicted.
 I first then challenge, from the flower of Rome,
 (And with a Roman joy I see that challenge
 Accepted almost ere it is promulged,)
 That hearty and unanimous consent,
 From whose reverberation speedily
 Each foe of Rome will be dispersed or slain.

Cim. With so much wonder is my heart o'er-
 whelm'd,
 Hearing of this unanimous consent,
 That I first answer here, though I infringe
 Rigid prescription, younger than so many.
 To us to-day then, who have been already
 Mute by compulsion for so many years,
 To us is liberty of speech to-day
 Restored. I first then will attempt to speak ;
 I, who beheld great Cato in my arms
 In Utica expire. Ah, were my thoughts
 Equal to his ! If not in loftiness,

they may be similar in brevity.
 their abuses, other enemies,
 and other wrongs, far less endurable,
 are Rome bestows a thought upon them
 he ought to punish first. The massacre
 of Rome, e'en from the Gracchi to this time,
 could furnish matter for a copious tale.
 her forum and her temples, Rome has seen
 her dwellings not less sacred, whelm'd in blood :
 With this is Italy, with this her seas
 are all defiled. What portion is there now
 of Rome's vast empire with the waste of blood
 not reeking ? Is this by the Parthians spill'd ?—
 The formerly good citizens are changed
 to butchering ruffians ; to atrocious swords
 the necessary ploughs ; the sacred laws
 to chains and implements of punishment ;
 The generals to ferocious despots : thus
 What more remains to suffer ? what to fear ?
 then assert, that, to their pristine state,
 he aught is done, all things should be restored ;
 And Rome should be regenerate ere avenged.
 An easy process to her genuine sons.

An. I, consul, speak ; to me it now belongs :
 let him not speak, or if he speak be heard,
 Who to the idle winds doth bellow forth
 his pompous imbecillities.—Oh fathers,
 in that which our invincible dictator
 proposes to us now, 'tis my opinion
 Although for private ends he may propose it)
 it is not so much question to restore
 Rome to its pristine glory, as to urge
 to that on which the safety, power of Rome,

In short her very being doth depend.
Did e'er a Roman leader unavenged
In battle fall? Did e'er our ancestors
Endure the opprobrium of an adverse battl,
Without retaliation? Hostile heads
By thousands and by thousands did they not
Atone, cut off for every Roman corse?
Shall Rome now suffer that, since the confines
Of earth and her supremacy are one,
Which she would ne'er endure when limited
Within the boundaries of Italy?
And to her glory grant that she were deaf;
Grant that we suffered with impunity
The Parthian tribes their victory to enjoy;
From such a precedent what obloquy,
And more, what injury, would not accrue
To Rome?—A numerous and a warlike people
Dwell 'twixt the Parthian frontiers and our own.
Who, who would bridle them, if it should cease,
The salutary terror of our arms?
Germany, Greece, Illyria, Macedon,
Gaul, Britain, Africa, Iberia, Egypt,
These martial tribes, which outraged and o'ercome,
On every side surround us; would they serve
Unwarlike Rome? No, not a day, . . . an hour!
Imperiously, besides your honour, then,
An incontestible necessity
Impels to Asia, to make war against it,
Our haughty eagles. For the enterprize
It now alone remains to chuse the leader.
But who would venture to propose himself
In Cæsar's presence? Let us chuse another,
On the condition, that in conquests, he,

In finish'd wars, in victories, in triumphs,
 Surpasses Cæsar, or that he alone
 In battle equals him. Of what avail
 Is creeping envy? Cæsar, now, and Rome,
 Are but one object by two names express'd;
 Since Cæsar doth alone for Rome assert,
 For Rome maintain, the empire of the world.
 Then he is now his country's open foe,
 And a base miscreant, who would dare prefer,
 Envious, his private ends, minute and abject,
 To the common greatness and security.

Cas. I am that miscreant then, yes, I am he,
 Whom he, that is a traitor, calls a traitor.
 I am the first to be so; 'tis my boast;
 Since Cæsar now and Rome are but one thing
 Call'd by two names. Who to the purpose speaks,
 Speaks briefly. Others let them here repeat,
 In servile, artful, and unmeaning accents,
 The name of country: if there now remain
 For us a country, to the senators
 It doth belong over her state to watch:
 This in their name do I asseverate;
 But to true senators; and not like these,
 Convened fortuitously; for a vain form
 Summon'd to ridicule; and not like these
 Intimidated and encircled round
 By bullies and bribed satellites; and not
 Almost beheld and heard by citizens
 Bought and corrupted by their demagogues,
 Who feed them with vain words. Is this a people?
 This, that no other liberty esteems
 Or knows, except to be an obstacle
 To all that's great and good, to be a shield
 To all abuse? We now are told to look

Amid the gladiatorial spectacles,
 Or from the tribute of corn-bearing Egypt,
 For Rome's lost majesty. From such a race
 First may we see the senate purged, and then
 May each of us be heard. My sentiments
 Meanwhile I think it fitting to premise ;
 And 'tis, that there should be no dictator,
 Since we are not at war ; that there should be
 Just consuls chosen ; a just senate form'd ;
 And that the forum should again behold
 Just people and authentic tribunes. Then
 Rome may deliberate on the Parthian war ;
 Then, when by symptoms manifest, once more
 Rome by true Romans may be recognized.
 While of her former state we see a shadow,
 Her true and few remaining sons for her
 Will loyally to the utmost of their power
 Exert themselves, now her so many foes
 'Gainst her to the utmost of their power are leagued.

Cic. A son, and not ungrateful son, of Rome,
 More than myself I love her : and that day
 When from the impious hand of Catiline
 I rescued her, Rome hail'd me as her father.
 Remembering this, the sweet tears yet I feel
 Of gratitude and tenderness suffuse
 My swimming eyes. The public happiness,
 True peace, and liberty, have ever been,
 And are, my wish. Could I for Rome alone,
 And as I've always lived for her, expire !
 Oh what will be my gain, if for her sake
 Consumed, this remnant of a painful life
 I to her peace devote ! I speak sincerely ;
 My hoary hairs may well obtain belief.
 My language doth not tend to exasperate

Him on the one hand, whom disdain, though just,
 Already has enough in soul embitter'd,
 From many and long-suffer'd injuries ;
 Nor, on the other hand, to adulate
 The already sovereign arrogance of him
 Who deems himself without competitor.
 I speak to reconcile the good of Rome
 (If it be possible) with that of all.
 We have already for a long time seen
 The ill effects among us of the sword,
 Unholy laid bare. The names alone
 Of the ringleaders who infringed the laws
 Were changed, their aim unvarying, and each one
 Added to the accumulating ills
 Of the oppress'd republic. Who among us
 Sincerely loves his country ; who in heart,
 Not in words only, is a citizen ;
 Now my example let him imitate.
 Amid the rancour, hidden and profound,
 The manifest atrocious enmities ;
 Amid the brandish'd swords, (if once again
 The raging furies venture to unsheathe them,)
 Let each of us expose his breast unarm'd.
 Thus will these frantic and discordant spirits
 Be laid at rest, or we alone shall fall
 Slain by their cruel swords ; to their disgrace,
 Sole, genuine Romans, we.— These are the thoughts,
 The aspirations, and the prayers are these
 Of one, a Roman citizen : do ye
 All listen to him equally : and who
 With too much glory is already laden,
 Let him not tarnish it, or lose it quite ;
 By trying to no purpose to gain more :

And who with envy sees another's glory,
 Let him remember that not envious thoughts,
 But lofty emulation in the contest
 Of real virtue, can alone augment
 His own pretensions, and without a stain,
 And laudably, diminish those of others.
 But since at home there doth so much remain
 To occupy our thoughts, I deem that we
 Ought, for the present, to let Parthian wars
 To nearer interests yield. Ah, may Rome be
 Harmonious by our means, and recomposed !
 And may the Parthians at one glance from her,
 And whate'er foreign foes she may possess,
 All disappear, like clouds before the wind.

Bru. Cimber, and Cassius, and great Cicero,
 Their lofty Roman sentiments, so like
 True Romans have announced, that nought remains
 For him succeeding them to say of Rome.
 Nought now remains except to speak of him
 Who in himself has centred Rome, and now
 E'en deigns not to dissemble it.—To thee,
 Cæsar, since Rome in thee alone exists,
 I of thyself will speak, and not of Rome.
 I love thee not, and this thou knowest, thou
 Who lov'st not Rome ; sole cause I do not love thee :
 I do not envy thee, because no more
 I deem myself inferior to thee,
 Since thou'rt become inferior to thyself :
 I do not fear thee, Cæsar, since I'm always
 Ready to die rather than be a slave ;
 And, finally, I hate thee not, because
 In nothing do I fear thee.—Now then, hear
 Brutus alone ; to him alone yield faith ;

Not to thy servile consul, who so long
By the reflection of thy virtues stands,
While he with thee thy vices only shares,
And seconds and augments them. Thou, oh Cæsar,
Perhaps yet deservest to be sav'd ; (I think so ;)
And I would have it so ; since thou so much,
Wert thou reform'd, might'st benefit thy country :
Yes, thou may'st do it, as thou hast been able
To injure her so grievously already.
This thy own people, (Cassius hath erewhile
Pourtray'd it to the life,) this thy own people,
A few days since, did somewhat disenchant
Thy visions of supreme authority.
Thou heard'st the cries of popular indignation,
That day when, as in sport, the majesty
Of the new consul gallantly attempted
To round thy forehead with the royal wreath.
Thou heard'st all shudder ; and thy regal rage
Blanch'd thy fierce countenance. But by thy hand
The bauble was repell'd, which, in thy heart,
Thou didst so ardently desire : from hence
Thou wert assail'd with universal plaudits.
But these same acclamations of thy people,
Which, though in truth not really Roman, were not
Infatuate as thou hadst wished them,
Infix'd a mortal anguish in thy breast.
That Rome might have a short lived tyranny,
Thou that day learnedst, but a king . . . no, never !
Thou know'st too clearly for thy inward peace,
That thou art not a citizen : and yet,
I also see it, that it weighs upon thee
To be a tyrant ; and for this, I think,
Thou wert not born : thou see'st now if I hate thee.

Reveal thou quickly then, if thou dost know it,
 To us and to thyself, that which thou think'st,
 That which thou hop'st to be. And learn thou now,
 If thou dost know it not, thou dictator,
 Learn from a citizen, from Brutus learn,
 That which thou meritest to be. Oh Cæsar,
 A ministration far more glorious
 Than that which thou assumest doth await thee.
 Tyrant of Rome thou covetest to be ;
 Presume, and thou shalt certainly succeed,
 To announce thyself as her deliverer.—
 Thou, by the freedom with which Brutus speaks,
 May'st clearly apprehend, that if of us
 Thou deem'st thyself lord paramount, as yet
 The bond of *my* allegiance is not seal'd.

An. Of thy rash insolence ere long I swear
 The punishment . . .

Cæ. Let this suffice.—So long,
 In hearing you with silence, have I given
 Of my forbearance no slight specimen :
 And should I hold myself of all things here
 The master, 'twould not misbecome me now ;
 Since I with patience have not only dared
 To hear, but have provoked, th' audacity
 Of reprehensive tongues. Yet to yourselves
 This consultation seems not free enough ;
 Although you have assail'd the dictator
 With insults, which he might or might not hear.
 I in the court of Pompey then invite you,
 Far from the forum, by to-morrow's dawn,
 To a more free debate, and without arm'd
 Attendants to defend you from the people.
 There, more at length, words more insulting yet,

And more reproachful, shall I hear from you :
 But there too must the Parthians' destiny
 Be finally resolv'd.—If it seem meet
 To the majority, that Cæsar's fate
 Be also there determined, I dissent not,
 Provided that majority decree it.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cicero, Cimber.

Cic. There does not now remain a safe asylum
 Save this, where we may treat o' the fate of Rome.

Cim. Ah ! little now is left for us to say ;
 Actions alone remain for us. I have
 Invited hither to us in thy name
 Brutus and Cassius ; soon will they be here.
 The exigence admits of no delay ;
 Our country by to-morrow's rising sun
 Too certainly, alas ! will undergo
 The last extreme of danger.

Cic. 'Tis most true
 That the secure audacity of Cæsar,
 Allowing no more to his vile designs
 Any delay, doth render on our part
 Further delay impossible. At length
 For nought he wishes but his troops in arms ;
 Since from experience he is convinced
 That universal terror will do more
 To further his attempts, than the bribed love
 Of the unstable people. In his heart
 He laughs at our misfortunes ; and lets us

At leisure rail, provided he obtain
His army : and of this he is secure
From the majority of votes which he
Has purchased in the senate. Afterwards
At his return he'll be avenged on us
For our last efforts in the cause of freedom
His warriors he marches to the Parthians,
To give the last shock to expiring Rome
At his return, as formerly he gave
To her, returning from the Rhine, the first.
He hath advanced too far now to retract :
Now even I confess that we cannot
Longer delay with safety. But, alas !
As a good citizen should do ! I tremble :
I shudder, to reflect, that, on an hour
Flecting, perchance, as that of our debate,
The fate of Rome depends.

Cim. Behold to us
Cassius repairs.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Cassius, Cicero, Cimber.

Cas. Have I come late ? But ah,
Brutus is not yet here.

Cim. He comes ere long.

Cas. Here many of our friends would follow me :
But in these melancholy walls, are spies
So much more numerous than good citizens,
That, all suspicion wholly to prevent,
I rather chose to come here unattended.
To the unbending rectitude of Cimber,
To Cicero's perspicuous intellect,

Lastly to my implacable revenge,
 'Twere now sufficient could we only add
 The sublime energy of Brutus' rage.
 Can e'er another council be convened
 Of nobler temperament than this; and hence
 Better adapted to exert itself
 For Rome's prosperity?

Cic. Ah! may the Gods
 That watch o'er Rome will that it thus may prove!
 I, far as in me lies, do hold myself
 With hand, voice, heart, ready to serve my country.
 And I regret that there remains to me
 But a weak remnant of declining years
 To sacrifice for her. My wasted strength
 Can with my hand but little serve her cause;
 But if this tongue hath ever in the forum
 Or in the senate, the high sentiments
 Of freedom utter'd, more than ever yet,
 On this day Rome shall hear me thunder forth
 The same high sentiments of freedom: Rome,
 Whom I will not a single day survive,
 If she is doom'd to fall amid her chains.

Cas. Thou always wert the sincere orator
 Of liberty; and by thy eloquence hath Rome
 Oft from her abject lethargy been roused:
 But who remains now that deserves to hear thee?
 All now are apprehensive, or are bribed;
 Nor, if they heard them, could they comprehend
 Thy elevated sentiments...

Cic. The people,
 Though no more Roman, is a people still:
 And though each man be in himself debased
 As far as man can be, the greater part,

Soon as the multitude collects, is changed :
I further would assert, that we may give them,
When in the forum they're assembled all,
A spirit altogether different
From that which each 'mid his own Lares feels.
Truth, falsehood, anger, pity, reason, grief,
Justice, and honour, glory even yet,
Are impulses, which, by the man who has them
All truly in his heart, as on his lips,
May be, yet all of them, at will transfused
(Whate'er their individual character)
Into the hearts of congregated thousands.
I hope to-day to ascend, and not in vain,
'The rostrum, if indignant eloquence,
Fervid and free, may aught avail ; and there,
If it be needful, I'm resolved to die.
Say on what base was that prodigious power
Of Cæsar founded, which we all now fear ?
Th' opinion of the many. With the sword,
'Tis true, he conquer'd Gaul, but with his tongue,
With plausible insinuating words,
First o'er his legions the ascendancy
He gain'd, and o'er the people then in part :
He could not purchase, or exterminate all,
He only : but he easily could make,
All those whom he had first inveigled, slaves.
And cannot we then equally with him
Make language instrumental to our purpose ?
Cannot we undeceive, illuminate,
And medicate the heart and intellect
Of all our fellow citizens ? The truth,
In such a contest, 'twixt my eloquence,
And that of the tyrannical dictator,

The truth would be on my side, force on his.
 And in the noble drift of my discourse
 Do I so much confide, that if but once,
 I gain a hearing, I his weapons scorn.
 To hearts and ears that have been Roman once,
 Such fervid language I may yet address,
 That for a while at least they may become
 Romans once more. The character of Caesar
 Fully disclosed, and Caesar is no more.

Cim. There is no doubt, but that if Rome could
 hear thee,

Thy manly speech might rouse her to new life :
 But if thou also generously chose
 To ascend alone, and die upon the rostrum,
 For now to him 'tis fatal who dare breathe
 The name of freedom thence, it also thou
 Dared to do this alone ; by the infamous,
 And purchased howlings of base parasites
 All means of being heard would be cut off.
 Those wretches now exclusively possess
 The bar of eloquence, and banish thence
 All upright orators. On Tyber's banks
 Rome stands no longer : it behoves us now
 In the remotest provinces to seek
 For arms, for virtues, and for citizens.
 A dire necessity, and this alone,
 Could justify us in recurring now
 To intestine war ; but yet this is not peace.
 We are compel'd once more with blood to purge
 Those rankling humours, which, oppressing Rome,
 Keep her exanimate 'twixt life and death.
 The illustrious Cato was a real Roman,
 And he detested uselessly to shed •

The blood of citizens : yet that most just
Among just men, profess'd, that, " nursed in arms,
And now by arms exhausted, arms alone
Can now regenerate Rome." What else remains
For us to do ? Or Rome is overcome,
And with her fall all her true citizens ;
Or she's victorious, and the guilty ones
Are all dispersed, annihilate, or changed.
Has Cæsar quite chain'd victory to his car ?
Let him be only once discomfited,
And e'en his very partizans, convinced
That he is not invincible, will then
With other eyes behold him ; with one voice
All will then dare to execrate his name,
And, as an impious tyrant, to proscribe him.

Cas. Why first by us should he not be proscribed ?
When we ourselves should give it, when ourselves
Should be the first to execute the sentence,
From a vile populace should we expect it ?
While at our will, e'en in the midst of Rome,
Within her dwellings, in the very senate,
We may thus cope with Cæsar, and obtain
O'er him a complete victory : in the camp,
Ought he, and at the risk of many lives
Less impious than his own, to be provoked
By us to dangerous and uncertain fight,
Perhaps to be the victor ?—Where a sword,
This sword of mine alone, and this my fierce,
Inexorable rage that makes me wield it,
Suffice, more than suffice, to annihilate
That despicable life, which holds all Rome
In tears, unworthily enslaved and chain'd ;
Where nought is wanting to destroy the tyrant

Whoe'er he be, except a *single* sword,
 And one, a Roman, that may brandish it ;
 Wherefore should we unsheathe so many ?—Ah !
 Let others sit in council, weigh, discuss,
 Delay, and waver till they miss the time :
 I, among all schemes, deem the briefest best ;
 And now especially since the most brief
 Will be the holdest, noblest, and most surc.
 Worthy it is of Rome to slay this one
 Openly ; and by the hand of Cassius
 Cæsar deserves to die. To the just rage
 Of other men I leave the punishment
 Of th' infamous slave—consul Anthony.—
 Lo, Brutus comes : ah, let us, let us hear,
 If he dissents from me.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Brutus, Cicero, Cassius, Cimber.

Cic. Does Brutus come
 So late to such a lofty conference ? . . .
Bru. Ah ! I had been the first there, if erewhile
 I had not been prevented . . .
Cim. And by whom ?
Bru. Not one of you could guess.—'Twas An-
 thony
 That would at length address me.
Cic. Anthony !
Cas. And the vile satellite of Cæsar gain'd
 An audience from Brutus ?
Bru. Yes, he gain'd it,
 And in his Cæsar's name. 'He would confer
 With me, at all events ; and he invites me,

If I consent to it, to come to him ;
Or he to me . . .

Cim. His offer was rejected ? . . .

Bru. No. Cæsar as a friend, in my pure heart
Wakes no more fear, than Cæsar as a foe.
Hence I will hear him, and ere long, and in
This very temple . .

Cas. What can be his wish ?

Bru. Perhaps, to bribe me — But ye still, I hope,
Confide in Brutus.

Cas. More than in ourselves.

Cim. In Brutus all confide ; e'en the most vile.

Bru. And to provoke me, in respect of deeds,
(As if I slept) I met with on my road
Exciting exhortations scatter'd round me,
Strong, brief, and Roman ; and at once expressive
Of praise and blame towards me, as if I were
Slow to do that which Rome expected of me.
This I am not : and every stimulus
Applied to me is idle.

Cas. But, I pray thee,
What hop'st thou from this interview with Cæsar ?

Cic. Thou hop'st perhaps to change him . . .

Bru. I am pleased
That the sagacity of the great Cicero,
My scheme in part conjectures.

Cas. Oh ! what say'st thou ?

We all, long time expecting thee, have here
At length express'd our sentiments : we all,
In hating Cæsar, and in loving Rome,
In being willing for her sake to die,
Were as one man : the end of all the same.
But in the best means to obtain what end

Our sentiments were threefold. To resort
 To legislative strife ; to rouse from sleep
 The people, by imposture drugg'd, to arms ;
 Or with the private sword to immolate
 Cæsar in Rome ; now which of these would be
 The choice of Brutus ?

Bru. Mine ?—Not one of these
 At present. If mine afterwards proved vain,
 I would undoubtedly adopt the last

Cas. And thine ?—What other then remains to us ?

Bru. To you I'm known : I am not wont to speak
 In vain ; be pleased to hear me.—Rome is now
 Far too infirm to be in one day cured.
 The people might be roused, but briefly roused,
 To virtue : never with the bait of gold
 Are they, as they are drawn to baseness, drawn
 To rectitude. Can real excellence
 Be ever purchased ? The corrupted people
 Would form a treacherous basis for fresh freedom.
 Perhaps the senators are less infected ?
 One may enumerate the upright ones ;
 The guilty also in their hearts hate Cæsar,
 Not because he robs all of liberty ;
 But because he prevents, (a single tyrant,)
 Their being tyrants in their turn. To him
 They would succeed ; they envy, hence, and hate
 him.

Cic. Ah, were this not, as 'tis indeed, too true !

Bru. Amid such vices the good citizen
 Should steer with care, lest he to bad and worse.
 Cæsar, though now a tyrant, was not once so.
 The impious wish to be lord paramount
 Hath only lately risen in his heart :

And the vile Anthony, by stratagems,
 Adds fuel to his flame, to drag him on
 To his perdition, that he thus may rise
 Upon his ruin'd fortunes. Friends like these
 Fall to the lot of tyrants.

Cas. In his breast,
 Connatural with his being, evermore
 Cæsar possess'd the thirst to be supreme.

Bru. No; not to reign supreme: he never dared
 To wish for so much. Now thou deemest him
 More bold, more lofty, than he ever was.
 Ambition, a necessity for fame,
 An ardent spirit, and no lofty wish
 To be avenged on private enemies,
 And lucky opportunity, at last,
 More than aught else, have to that height impell'd
 him,

At which when now arrived, he feels himself
 Astonish'd at his own temerity.
 A thirst for honour more than thirst for power
 Still, in his heart, maintains ascendancy.
 Should I prove this to you? Does he not now
 Pent to attack the Parthians, and to quit
 Rome where he still possesses many foes?

Cim. He hopes to purchase with the Parthian
 laurels
 The royal crown.

Bru. Then he would rather be
 To valour than to force indebted for it:
 He is thence more ambitious than corrupt...

Cas. Dost thou to us pronounce his eulogy?...

Bru. Hear the conclusion.—Cæsar wavers still
 Within himself; he wishes yet for fame;

He is not therefore yet, in heart at least,
 Consummately a tyrant ; but, he now
 Begins to tremble, and a short time since
 He knew not fear ; He then approaches near
 The brink of tyranny. A few days since
 Terror assail'd him, when he saw the crown
 By his bribed people from his grasp withheld.
 But Cæsar, be he what he may, as yet
 Is not contemptible, is not unworthy
 That others should facilitate for him
 The path of reformation — For myself ;
 I must despise myself, or him esteem,
 Since I consented for the gift of life
 To be indebted to him, on the day
 When, in Pharsalia's fields, a vanquish'd foe,
 Within his power I fell.—I live ; and this
 My life is a sufficient blot to Brutus ;
 But without baseness or ingratitude
 I will devise the means that blot to cancel.

Cic. Such often is the fate of war : thou thus
 Hadst also used thy victory o'er him,
 If thou had'st conquer'd. Did not he himself,
 Once as a gift receive that life, to Rome
 Now so disastrous ? • Yes, did not he also
 Receive it as a gift from Scylla's hands
 By express grace, and far more express error ?

Bru 'Tis true ; but never does my mind forego
 The recollection of a benefit.
 Yet at the same time do my country's claims,
 And my own duties, in my heart sink deep.
 In short, to Brutus, Cæsar such appears,
 That, (as he is, as now from day to day
 He more becomes, a tyrannous dictator,

Brutus, on no condition, will permit
 His life to be prolong'd ; or he will kill him,
 Or he himself in the attempt will fall . . .
 But such to Brutus Cæsar also seems,
 That he alone to Rome can now restore,
 If he once more become a citizen,
 Liberty, empire, energy, and life.
 He is e'en now the idol of the people;
 Let him become a model to the good;
 Let him against the guilty arm the laws,
 With added errors ; till the whole returns
 To its original state, be all his power
 Concentred to prevent those sons of faction,
 From ruining those laws. He was endow'd
 With lofty thoughts ; he was a citizen :
 For fame he burns yet : he is blinded, yes ;
 But such from prosperous fate, and impious friends,
 Who have alone made him forsake the path
 Of real glory, such from these alone
 Is he become.—Or nothing is my speech,
 Or I shall know how from my breast to draw
 Such strenuous and impressive words, to use
 To him such true, such strong, tremendous reasons,
 And in such numbers use them, that I hope,
 Yes I indulge the hope, to force e'en Cæsar ;
 To make him great indeed, so pure in virtue,
 That he o'er every man, o'er every Roman,
 Will rise unparallel'd in excellence,
 Yet be a simple citizen of Rome.—
 I only do prefer his fame to mine,
 Hoping that fame may benefit his country :
 And this my enterprize, methinks, affords
 Convincing proof of my sincerity.—

But, if in vain Brutus speaks now to Cæsar,
 Thou seest it, Cassius, that I ever wear it;
 Behold the dagger, which will be more swift
 To slay him than thy sword . . .

Cic. Oh genuine patriot!

Thou art too great, ill canst thou comprehend
 The tyrant Cæsar, judging from thyself.

Cas. Illustrious Brutus, an impossible thing,
 But worthy of thee, thou projectest: one
 Thou only could'st attempt. I oppose not
 Myself to thee. Ah, Cæsar fully can,
 And he alone, divest thee of thy error.
 To change a tyrant to a citizen?

'Tis in itself proof, this thy generous hope,
 Oh Brutus, that thou ne'er could'st be a tyrant.

Bru. That will be soon made clear: myself here-
 after

Will give you full account of all my deeds.

If I, a vain, abortive orator,

Oh Cassius, prove; so much more shalt thou have me,
 I swear to thee, obedient to thy orders,
 A lusty and a fierce tyrannicide.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cæsar, Anthony.

An. Cæsar, yes, soon will Brutus come to thee
 Within this very temple, where erewhile
 Thou didst consent to hear and tolerate
 His arrogant harangues. Ere-long shalt thou
 Hear him, since thus thou wilt, as man to man.

Cæ. I hold myself for this to thee indebted;
 'Twas not an easy undertaking now
 To persuade Brutus to confer with me;
 Nor had I dared to trust to any one
 Except thyself an embassy like this.

An. How much it grieves me, that to my entreaties

Inexorably deaf, thou dost persist
 Thus Brutus to support! This is the first
 Of all thy wishes, with which Anthony
 Reluctantly complied. Yet in the guise
 Of amity, and in thy name, I stoop'd
 To supplicate him whom I know to be,
 By certain proof, thy mortal enemy,
 And whom as such I utterly abhor.

Cæ. Many hate Cæsar; yet, one man alone
 I deem a foe that's worthy of myself:
 And he is Brutus.

An. Thence, not Brutus only,
 But Brutus first, the Cassii, and the Cimbri,
 The Tullii, and so many more should die.

Cæ. The more embitter'd, lofty, strong my foe,
 So much more pleasure do I always take
 In overcoming him; and oftentimes
 More, than with arms, with pardon have I done this.
 To have recourse to reconciling words,
 When I have power to arbitrate by force;
 Persuade, convince, and captivate a heart
 That swells with hate; to make that man my friend,
 Whose very being I could crush to nought;
 Ah, this against a worthy enemy,
 This is the most illustrious revenge;
 And it is mine.

An. Let Cæsar learn to be
Great from himself alone; nature for this
Intended him: but how at once to make
Rome and himself secure, let him be taught
To-day by him who loves them both alike:
And above every man, that man am I
I ne'er shall cease reminding thee, that if
Thou say'st not Brutus, thou art herein clack'd
More by thy vain and individual glory,
Than by thy real fondness for thy country
And that thou manifestest little heed
For the security of both.

Cæ. Would'st thou
Cæsar intimidate with base suspicion?

An. If Cæsar will not for himself, for Rome
He might, and ought to tremble.

Cæ. Cæsar ought
To die for glory, and for Rome; but never
To tremble for himself, never for her.
I in the camp the foes of Rome have conquer'd;
These were the only enemies of Cæsar.
'Mong those, who against her the sword unsheathed,
Was Brutus; I already, arms in hand,
Have, as a foe, o'ercome him, and e'en then
With the just sword of war I slew him not;
Now in the walls of Rome, oh heaven! unarm'd,
Shall I now cause him to be murder'd, I
With the insidious and guilty dagger,
Or with the unjust axe?—There is no cause,
That ever could to such an outrage goad me:
And even if I wish'd it;... Ah! perhaps...
I could not... do it.—But yet finally,
To my so many triumphs, that o'er Brutus,

That also o'er the Parthians, are wanting :
 The one shall be the instrument to the other.
 I will make Brutus, at all risks, my friend.
 At present more than every other object
 The meditated vengeance for the death
 Of murder'd Crassus, weighs upon my thoughts ;
 And in the enterprise, in which at once
 The fate of Rome and Cæsar are involved,
 Brutus may much assist me.

An. Thy known
 Canst thou increase ?

Cæ. While there remains aught more
 For me to do, I deem what I have done
 A nothing : such my nature is — 'Gainst Parthia
 An impulse irresistible impels me.
 Shall Rome, while Cæsar lives, be ever conquer'd ?
 Ah ! let him perish first a thousand times.
 But while I fight in Asia, I ought not
 To leave the city full of factious spirits,
 And humours rankling and unreconciled ;
 Nor would I leave her full of blood and terror ;
 Though this may be the most effectual means
 To render her submissive. — Brutus only
 Can level all for me . . .

An. Then Anthony
 Thou deem'st a thing of nought ?

Cæ. — Part of myself
 Art thou in all my military projects :
 Hence at my side still I wish thee to be
 The terror of the Parthians. I propose
 In other ways to avail myself of Brutus.

An. I am prepared by every means to serve thee ;
 And this thou knowest. But thou art too blind

As respects Brutus.

Cæ. He is far more blind
As respects me, perchance. But this, I hope,
Will be the day when I may undeceive him:
I'm forc'd to-day at least to make th' attempt.

An. Behold him here.

Cæ. Now leave me with him; soon
Hence will I come to thee.

An. Ah, mayest thou
Completely extricate thyself from error;
And him in time, too, thoroughly detect.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Brutus, Cæsar.

Bru. Oh Cæsar, we are ancient foes: but thou
Art hitherto the conqueror; and yet
Thou seem'st the happier. But I am still
Than thou less wretched, though I seem the con-
quer'd.

But whate'er be our state, o'erwhelm'd, oppress'd,
Conquer'd, infirm, exanimate is Rome.

An equal impulse, though from different motives,
Has hither brought us to confer together.

Thou hast important things to say to me
If Anthony speak the truth: and also I
Come to impart to thee important things,
If thou dare listen to them.

Cæ. Although Brutus
Hath ever been my foe, I ne'er was such,
Nor am I now to him: nor, if I would,
Could I be ever so. I to thy dwelling
Would have myself repair'd to speak with thee;

But I shrunk back lest it might be by thee
 Deem'd an indignity, if Cæsar dared
 To go, where, as the wife of Brutus, dwells
 The sister of great Cato : hence I sent
 Earnest enticacies to thyself to come
 Hither from thence.—Me, without any pomp
 Thou seest alone, by lictors not preceded ;
 In all thy equal, Brutus : if indeed
 Thou count on me not as such : Here thou wilt hear
 Nor Rome's dictator, nor the conqueror
 Of the illustrious Pompey . . .

Bru. The only train
 Not unbecoming Cæsar is his valour :
 And more especially when he presents
 Himself to Brutus.—Happy thou, if thou
 Could'st also leave behind thee, as thou canst
 Thy lictors, and their fasces, the remorse,
 And the perpetual and cleaving terror,
 Of a perpetual dictator !

Cæ. Terror ? . . .

This is a word not even to my ears,
 Much less then to my heart, yet known.

Bru. It was
 Unknown to mighty Cæsar in the camp,
 Invincible as a leader ; it is not
 To Cæsar in the walls of Rome, by force
 Now her dictator. To deny this to me
 Cæsar is too magnanimous : to me
 He may confess it without shame. To dare
 T' acknowledge this to Brutus, in itself
 Will constitute no small part of his greatness.
 Let us speak frankly : it becomes us both.—
 One individual never can impress

A multitude with fear, till he himself
 Has previously felt it. To prove this,
 Hear what is now thy state of mind towards me.
 Thou without opposition may'st kill Brutus:
 Thou knowest that I love thee not; nay more,
 Thou knowest I may be an obstacle
 To thy iniquitous ambition; yet,
 Why dost thou not do this? Because thou fearest,
 That if thou kill'd me now it might increase
 Thy own perplexities. Thou would'st meanwhile,
 Hear me, and speak with me; because that fear
 Is now thy only law; nor this perchance
 Thou know'st thyself; or flyest the conviction.

Cæ. Ungrateful! . . . In Pharsalia's field was not
 Thy life within my power?

Bru. But thou inflamed
 With glory, and yet glowing from the battle,
 Wert noble then; and thou wert born to be so;
 But thou from day to-day here more and more
 Sinkest beneath thyself.—Reform, and know
 That thou wert never born to be a cold,
 Pacific tyrant: I affirm it to thee . . .

Cæ. Thy praise, though mix'd with insults, pleases me.

I love thee; I esteem thee: and I would
 Be Brutus only, if I were not Cæsar.

Bru. Thou may'st be both; to Brutus may'st thou
 add,

And nothing take from Cæsar: I come to thee
 Myself, to exhort thee to it. It depends
 On thyself only to be great indeed:
 Yes, thou may'st be so, even far beyond
 Each ancient mighty Roman: and the means •

Are very simple; dare to adopt them then:
 I first to this conjure thee; and I feel,
 As I address thee, with true Roman tears
 Mine eyes suffused . . . But, ah! thou speakest not?
 Thou know'st well what my lofty means would be:
 Thou feel'st it in thy heart, the cry of truth,
 That there imperiously fulminates.
 Be bold, be bold; shake off thy abject chains,
 That put thee nothing e'en in thine own eyes;
 Which keep thee, more than others thou could'st
 keep

Enslaved and bound. To-day from Brutus thou
 Learn to be Cæsar. If of thy renown
 I were invidious, would'st thou hear me now
 Beseech thee to annihilate my own?
 I know the truth; I flatter not myself:
 I am in Rome inferior to thee
 In dignity, in years, in power, and triumphs,
 As well as fame. If by my single efforts
 The name of Brutus could be signalized,
 'Twere only possible for this to be
 By the entire destruction of thy name.
 A timid and a whispering voice I hear,
 A voice thence not legitimately Roman,
 Proclaiming Brutus Rome's deliverer;
 As it calls thee her tyrant. It is needful
 To make me such that I defeat, or slay thee.
 No slight achievement is the first; the second
 Is far more easy than thou canst believe:
 And if I had thought of myself alone,
 I had already been without a master:
 But I, a Roman, think of Rome; and chuse
 Thee to solicit, when I ought to slay thee,

For her sake only.—Yes, ah Cæsar, thou
 Convinced by me, should'st be compell'd once more
 To be her citizen. To Rome thou canst,
 Thou first, thou only, more effectually,
 A thousand times, than Brutus can, thou canst
 To Rome restore the whole; peace, liberty,
 Salvation, and a renovated lustre,
 In short, as much as thou hast taken from.
 Yet, for a little time, thy royal power
 Do thou, though as a citizen, exert,
 In reinforcing her enfeebled laws,
 In taking evermore from all the courage,
 And means to imitate thee as a tyrant;
 And thou wilt thus at once from all have taken,
 As far as they are Romans, the presumption
 To emulate thee as a citizen.—
 Now, tell me; dost thou think thou art less than
 Sylla?

He, far more guilty than thyself, more cruel,
 Embrued, and gorged with more abundant blood,
 He, yet presumed to be a citizen,
 And was illustrious.—Oh! how much more so
 Would Cæsar be, who has so much surpass'd
 Sylla in power! Greater, far greater then,
 Would be thy glory, if thou freely render,
 What power and artifice have given to thee,
 To her, thy country, whose sole right it is;
 If thou knowest better how to prize thyself;
 If thou, in short, preventest that henceforth
 In Rome to all eternity arise
 Another Cæsar, and another Sylla.

Cæ. —Sublime and ardent youth; thy eloquent
 And fervid exhortation, is, perchance,

But too, too true. Thy sentiments produce
 Unspeakable emotions in my heart;
 And then when thou call'st thyself less than me,
 Thy great superiority I feel
 E'en to my own confusion. But to be
 The first myself to confess this to thee,
 And not to be offended when I do it,
 And not to hate thee for it, ought to be
 To thee a certain, and a lofty proof
 That in my bosom I conceive for thee
 Some unexplain'd affection.—Thou art dear
 To me, believe it; thou art very dear.
 That which I have not time to accomplish now,
 I will that, after me, it be by thee
 Accomplish'd more effectively. Consent
 That to my many trophies I annex
 Those of the vanquish'd Parthians, and I die
 Contented. Great part of my life have I
 Pass'd in the camp: the camp alone would be
 To me a worthy tomb. 'Tis true, I've robb'd her
 In part, of freedom, but in more abundance
 I have increased for Rome her power and glory.
 Oh Brutus, at my death, thou wilt repair,
 Beneath the shadow of my victories,
 The wrongs which I have done to her. In me
 With safety Rome no longer can repose.
 The good which I would do to her, would be,
 By what I've done of evil, evermore
 Tarnish'd and poison'd.—Thence I've chosen thee
 As the physician in my secret thoughts,
 For her internal wounds: thou ever wert
 Upright and great, and better than myself,
 The Romans thou must make illustrious:

And thou, their perfect sanity restore.
I, as a father, speak to thee ; . . . and thou,
More than a son, oh Brutus, art to me.

Bru. . . . This thy discourse I scarcely comprehend.

To me in no wise justly can devolve
Thy illegitimate, extinguish'd power.
But what? Already speakest thou of Rome,
As a paternal heritage? . . .

Cæ. Ah! hear me.—I

From thee no longer can a subject hide,
Which, when once known to thee, entirely ought
To change thee in my favour.

Bru. Change thyself,
And I at once am changed; conquer thyself;
The only triumph that remains for thee . . .

Cæ. With different eyes, when thou hast heard
this secret,

Wilt thou behold me.

Bru. I shall ever be

A Roman. But explain thyself.

Cæ. . . . Oh Brutus,

In my deportment towards thee, in my looks,
And in my accents, in my very silence,
Say, dost thou not perceive that towards thyself
Boundless affections influence and transport me?

Bru. I see in thee I know not what emotion;
And from the man they rather seem to spring
Than from the tyrant: feign'd, I cannot think them;
Unfeign'd, to what I know not to impute them.

Cæ. . . . But thou, what impulses dost thou experience,

Towards me within thy bosom?

Br. Ah, a thousand!
 And for thyself alternately I prove
 All impulses, save envy. I know not
 How to express them; but in two I class them:
 Anger and horror, if thou'rt still a tyrant;
 If thou becom'st a man and citizen,
 Thou dost inspire me with unbounded love
 Mix'd with astonishment. Which of these two
 Would'st thou from Brutus?

Cæ. Love! To me thou ow'st it . . .
 A sacred, and indissoluble tie
 Binds thee to me

Br. To thee? What can this be? . . .

Cæ. Thou art my son.

Br. Oh heaven! What do I hear? . . .

Cæ. Ah, come, son, to my breast . . .

Br. Can it be so? . . .

Cæ. If thou believ'st this not from my report,
 Thou from thy mother surely wilt believe it.
 This is a letter from her; in Pharsalia,
 A few hours ere the battle, I received it.
 Behold: her hand is known to thee: peruse it!

Br. (*Reads the letter.*) "Cæsar, oh heaven!
 thou dost perhaps prepare,
 "Not only with thy fellow citizens,
 "And Pompey to wage war, but with thy son.
 "Brutus is th' offspring of our youthful loves.
 "I am constrain'd to make this known to thee;
 "To his confession nothing could have wrought me
 "Except a mother's tears. Thou shudderest, Cæsar;
 "Suspend, if time be yet allow'd, thy sword:
 "If thy son may'st be destroy'd; or thou
 "Thyself with thy own hand may'st slay thy son."

"I tremble . . . Oh may heaven grant that in time
 "A father may have heard my word! . . . I tremble . .
 "Servilia!"—Fierce and unexpected blow!
 The son of Cæsar, I?

Cæ. Ah yes! thou art.
 Come to my arms, ah come!

Bru. Oh Rome! . . . oh father!
 Oh nature! . . . oh my duty! . . . —Ere I clasp thee,
 Sec, 'at thy feet a suppliant Brutus falls.
 Nor will he rise, if he do not embrace
 In thee the father of himself . . . and Rome!

Cæ. Ah, rise, oh son!—how canst thou ever thus
 With such ferocious coldness freeze thy heart,
 That nature's first affections sway thee not?

Bru. And what, dost thou pretend to love thy son?
 Thou lov'st thyself; all feelings in thy heart
 Are to the love of rule alone subservient.
 Prove that thou art a citizen and father;
 The last a tyrant never is: ah prove
 That thou art such, and thou wilt find in me
 A son. Twice give me life: Brutus a slave
 Can never be; tyrant he will not be.
 Or Brutus is the son of a free father.
 Himself free also, in free Rome: or Brutus
 Will not exist. I'm ready to shed all
 My blood for Rome, and for thyself, if thou
 A Roman be, a father worthy Brutus . . .
 Oh joy! a noble tear do I behold
 Start from thine eye? The icy crust is snapp'd
 In which thy heart was cased; thou'rt now a father.
 Ah! hear thou by my lips the cry of nature;
 And Rome and Brutus shall for thee be one.

Cæ. . . . My heart thou rendest . . . Fierce neces-
 sity! . . .

I cannot now exclusively obey
 The emotions of my heart. Beloved Brutus,
 Hear me. Too far the servitude of Rome
 Is now advanced; with less of equity,
 And with more injury to herself, will others
 The reins of empire sieze upon. if now
 Brutus refuse them from the hands of Cæsar . . .

Bru. Oh trait'rous words! Oh infamous expressions

Of a corrupted and degenerate mind!
 To me thou never wert, nor art a father.
 Ere thou revealed'st thy ignoble heart,
 And my vile birth to me, had thy own hands
 Cut short my thread of life, that act had been
 Of kindness more expressive . . .

Cæ. Oh my son! . . .

Bru. Oh Cæsar, yield . . .

Cæ. Unnatural, . . . ungrateful . . .

What then wilt thou perform?

Bru. Or rescue Rome,
 Or in the attempt expire.

Cæ. I will reclaim thee,
 Or perish by thy hands. Unparallel'd
 And horrible is thy ingratitude . . .
 Yet, hence I hope that horror and repentance
 Will visit thee, or ere to-morrow's dawn
 Shall see us in the senate house convened.
 But if thou then, ungrateful! still persist
 Not to accept me for a father, then,
 If, as a son, thou still disdain to share
 With me the whole, on that same dawn shalt thou
 Find me again thy lord.

Bru. Ere then, I hope,

The horror and the shame to have found thyself
 A tyrant to no purpose, will have changed thee
 To a true father. In my breast at once
 The affection of a son cannot arise,
 If first, thou do not give to me a proof
 Sublime and strong of thy paternal love.
 A father's is the first of all affections;
 And in thy heart it ought to conquer. Then
 The most submissive, the most tender soul,
 The most affectionate that e'er was seen,
 Then wilt thou find in me . . . In being thy son
 What joy then, what devotion, and what pride,
 Oh father, shall I feel! . . .

Cæ. Thou art my son,
 Whatever I may be; nor e'er canst thou,
 Without being impious, strive against thy father . . .

Bru My name is Brutus; and to me is Rome
 A sublime mother! Ah, compel me not
 To deem that Roman Brutus who gave life
 And liberty to Rome at the expense
 Of his own children's blood, my only father.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Cæsar.

Cæ. Ah, wretched me! . . . And can it then be true,
 That, while I fetter all the conquer'd world,
 My son alone refuses to obey me?

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Cassius, Cimber,

Cim. That which I say to thee is certain : hence
A short time since Brutus was seen to go,
With troubled countenance, his eyes suffused
With tears, and towards his house he went. Oh could
He ever change? . . .

Cas. Ah no ! Brutus loves Rome ;
And he loves glory and integrity ;
Soon, as he promised, will he come to us.
I do rely and trust in him e'en more
Than in myself. Each word and deed of his
Spring from a lofty heart : the interest
Of Rome alone he weighs and contemplates.

Cim. Behold him here.

* *Cas.* Did not I tell thee so?

SCENE THE SECOND.

Brutus, Cassius, Cimber.

Bru. What may this mean ? I find you here alone.

Cas. And are we few, when thou'rt united to us ?

Bru. Tully is wanting . . .

Cim. Didst thou not know this ?

Erewhile with many other senators
From Rome precipitately he departed.

Cas. The frost of years hath paralyzed in him
His pristine ardour and his virtue . . .

Bru. But

Hath not extinguish'd them. Ah, let no Roman
Dare to despise the illustrious Cicero.
For a more fortunate conjuncture, or
For Rome's advantage, he reserves (I swear it)
His liberty and life

Cas. Oh happy we!

Certain are we, certain to gain, with freedom,
An honour'd and an honourable age,
Or in the bloom of life with Rome to perish.

Bru. Ah! yes; ye're blest indeed!... Not so am I;
To whom the horrible alternative
Alone remains of living as a slave,
Or perpetrating crimes abhorr'd by nature.

Cas. What dost thou mean?

Cim. And what hast thou derived
From thy long conference with Cæsar?

Bru. I?...

Nothing for Rome; immeasurable grief
And horror for myself; for you amazement,
Mix'd perchance also with a just contempt.

Cim. For whom?

Bru. For Brutus.

Cim. We, ... contempt ... for thee?

Cas. Thou, ... who of us art, and of Rome, the
soul?

Bru. I am, ... who wou'd have thought it?
Wretched me!...

I hitherto esteem'd myself the nephew
And son-in-law of Cato the divine, ...
And I'm the offspring of the tyrant Cæsar.

Cim. What do I hear? Can it be so?...

Cas. And be it;
This hinders not that Brutus still should be

The tyrant's most inexorable foe :

Ah ! Cassius swears this.

Bru. An unexpected

And horrible stigma on my blood I find ;

To cleanse it I should shed it all for Rome.

Cas. Brutus should be alone the son of Brutus.

Cim. But yet, what evidence did Cæsar bring ?
How on his word rely ? . . .

Bru. Ah, evidence

But too decisive he adduced to me.

He from the first spoke to me as a father :

Henceforth he wish'd that I should share with him

His execrable power, and afterwards

Should be its infamous inheritor.

Yet human tears from his despotic eyes

Ceased not to fall ; and he to me unfolded,

As to a son, the darkest labyrinths,

Unblushingly, of his corrupted heart.

At length, to make me perfectly convinced,

He made me read (oh heaven !) a fatal letter.

With her own hand, Servilia wrote it to him.

In that disastrous letter, which was written

And read by him ere the Pharsalian trumpet

" Gave dreadful note of preparation,"

Servilia apprehensively reveals

And proves, that I'm the offspring of their loves ;

And in concise and energetic words,

She conjures Cæsar not to make himself

The murderer of his son.

Cim. Oh fatal secret !

Why didst thou not in everlasting night

Remain conceal'd ? . . .

Cas. If as a son he loves thee. "

In seeing in thee so much real virtue,
In hearing thy sublime awakening thoughts,
How could the spirit of a genuine father
Ever resist thee? Thou hast now brought back
Indubitable proof from him, that nothing
Can rescue Caesar from his vile delusion.

Bru. Sometimes e'en yet to his infatuate mind
Truth penetrates, but with a feeble ray.
Accustom'd long to military power,
A fatal error absolutely rules him;
He deems consummate power consummate glory;
He thence persists to wish for this or death.

Cim. And such a monster, let him then have death.

Cas. He is a fix'd incorrigible tyrant.
Think now then that a citizen of Rome,
Oh Brutus, has no father . . .

Cim. Further think,
That he who is a tyrant has no sons . . .

Bru. And that in heart Brutus will ne'er have
peace.—

Yes, in your presence now, high-minded friends,
This I confess; to you, who feel at heart
Nature's affections sacred and sublime;
To you, who take the impulse and the law
That prompt this lofty necessary deed,
Which we are now resolved to execute,
From nature take it; to you, who now pant,
With me, for ever to annihilate
That tyranny which severs and divides
And blasts each holiest tie, to make alone
Children secure within their father's bosoms;
To you I fear not to shew all the grief
And all the horror, which, in rivalry,

Little by little, tear my heart to pieces,
Who am the son of Cæsar and of Rome.
Before the tyrant's face I shew'd myself
His bitter and inexorable foe ;
Nor did a word of mine, a look, a tear,
Betray a hun an weakness : but, alas !
No sooner had I from his sight escaped,
Than, as a victim, by a thousand furies
My spirit was beset. I flew from him
To my own Lares : there it is my lot
Always to find a sure alleviation
And fortifying counsel and a heart
Far more sublime than mine : yes, Cato's daughter,
Equal to Cato, the illustrious Porcia,
My Lares dignifies, the wife of Brutus . . .

Cas. Worthy of Cato and of Brutus is
That high-soul'd lady.

Cim. Ah ! could this be also
Said of Servilia !

Bru. Troubled as I was,
She welcomed me with countenance serene
And resolute, though now for many days
She had lain sick. Before I spake to her,
She cried to me, " Brutus, thou hast conceal'd
" Long in thy bosom mighty purposes :
" I never dared to question thee of them,
" Till by a certain but ferocious test
" I had myself my courage fully known.
" See ; I am not a woman."—Saying this,
She lets the foldings of her mantle fall,
And shews to me a large and horrible wound
Beneath her breast. Then she continued thus :
" With this right hand, and with this very dagger,

“ Now many days since, this wide wound was made :
 “ It has been evermore conceal’d from thee,
 “ And by my heart inflexibly supported,
 “ Although my infirm frame in sickness languish’d ;
 “ As length this wound, if I am not deceived,
 “ Renders me worthy both to hear and keep
 “ The secrets of my Brutus.”

Cim. What a woman !

Cas. What man can be compared to her ?

Bru. I tell

Prostrate before her, at a sight like this,
 As to my sublime tutelary genius ;
 And weeping, motionless, astonish’d, mute,
 I stood. Thence, reassuming speech, I told her
 All the ferocious conflicts of my heart.
 Seeing me weep, she wept ; but her tears were
 Roman, not feminine. She blamed alone
 The adverse fates ; and giving me perhaps
 The last embrace, she dared remind me yet
 That I’m a son of Rome, and Porcia’s husband,
 And that my name is Brutus.—Never, never,
 Not for an instant, have I given such names
 T’ oblivion : and I come to swear this to you.
 I only purpos’d to communicate
 To you the least part of my horrible state ;
 And what I hitherto have said is merely
 The anguish that throbs audibly to friends.
 Now I’m aware I should convince you first,
 That even nature cannot make me swerve
 From Rome . . . But grief, unutterable grief,
 Will take me afterwards too certainly
 From the possession of myself for ever.

Cim. ’Tis true that we are Romans ; but we are

Men also ; not in any wise to feel
 The affections of our nature, were in us
 Proofs of a brute ferocity . . . Oh Brutus ! . . .
 By thy words e'en from me are tears extorted.

Cas. All human impulses we ought to feel ;
 But before those due to our bleeding country,
 Sick and exanimate, the rest are mute :
 Or if they speak indeed, it is allowed
 To every man ere Brutus to regard them.

Bru. In thus accounting me more than I am,
 Noble and strong, thou makest me more strong
 And noble than I could be by myself.
 Cassius, behold my tears are now dispersed.
 The shades of night are gathering fast : to-morrow
 Will be the important day. I swear once more,
 That which already is resolved among us.
 On you do I implicitly depend ;
 Depend on me : nothing of you I ask,
 Except that you depend upon the signal
 From me alone

Cas. Ah ! thou art certainly
 The noblest of the Romans.—But, who comes ? . .

Cim. Whom see I ? Anthony ?

Bru. Assuredly
 Cæsar now sends him to me. Wait, and hear us.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Anthony, Cassius, Brutus, Cimber.

An. Oh Brutus, I come here in quest of thee :
 I wish to speak with thee.

Bru. Speak on : I listen.

An. But the dictator charged me with this message . . .

Bru. And what of that, I pray thee?

An. I should speak
To thee alone.

Bru. And here I am alone.
Cassius is husband of my sister Junia;
Cimber was friend, and the most faithful friend,
Of the great Cato, my wife's father: blood,
The love of Rome, and friendship, render us,
Though three we be in person, one in soul.
Cæsar can never utter aught to Brutus,
That he re-utters not immediately
To Cassius and to Cimber.

An. Is their father
Also the same with thine?

Bru. They too have shared
With me the shame and sorrow of my birth;
They know it all. Speak on.—I am assured
That Cæsar, generous, once again himself,
Sends thee to take from me the past disgrace
Of having once been deem'd a tyrant's son.
Divulge the whole, be quick: thou can'st not have
More acceptable witnesses than these
Of Cæsar's sublime transit, from a tyrant,
As he was lately, to a citizen.
Make haste; his new-born lofty love for Rome
Reveal to us; his true paternal views
Towards me, that I may bless the day in which
He gave me birth.

An. Cæsar commanded me
To speak to thee alone. A blind and true,
As much as wretched father, he would yet

Flatter himself, that thou would'st yield at last
To nature's sacred and persuasive voice.

Bru. And in what fashion am I then to yield?
To what submit myself? . . .

An. To love and honour
The author of thy life: or if, perchance,
Thy hard heart is incapable of love,
Not to betray thy most imperious duties;
To shew thyself not mindless and unworthy
Of benefits received; and finally
To merit those which he reserves for thee
In future. Fear'st thou to be too humane
If thou submit to this?

Bru. Those which thou now
Giv'st artfully to me are empty words.
Advance, and answer me. Is Cæsar ready
To-morrow, in full senate, to renounce
The office of dictator? Is he ready
His standing army to disband? To free
The Romans from their universal terror?
To free his friends and enemies from this,
And finally himself? To restore life
To the most sacred laws by him despised,
The enervated, obliterated laws?
To be the first to place himself beneath them?
These are the express, only benefits,
That a true father can confer on Brutus.

An. Enough. Would'st thou say more to me?

Bru. I say
No more to him that merits not to hear me.—
Return then to thy lord, and say to him,
That yet I hope, nay, more, I trust, am certain,
That in the senate by to-morrow's dawn,

He will propose useful and lofty things
 For Rome's prosperity and liberty :
 Tell him that then, before assembled Rome,
 Brutus will first fall prostrate at his feet,
 As citizen and son ; if he too be
 A citizen and father. Lastly, tell him,
 That in my heart I burn as much to make
 Rome live again for all of us, as I
 Burn to make Cæsar live again for her . . .

An. I understand thee. I will tell him that
 Which I (too fruitlessly, alas !) already
 Long since have said to him.

Bru. I esteem thee,
 A faithless and malignant messenger
 'Twixt Cæsar and myself : nevertheless,
 If he for this selected thee, thou hast
 Thy answer now received.

An. If the dictator
 Consulted me, or the interests of Rome,
 No other messenger would he dispatch
 To Brutus but the lictors with their axes.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Brutus, Cassius, Cimber.

Cim. Heard ye . . .

Cas. Oh Brutus ! . . . Thou'rt the God of Rome.

Cim. This arrogant and despicable slave,
 He also should be punish'd . . .

Bru. He, methinks,
 Would not be worthy our revenge. My friends,
 I make the last experiment to-morrow.
 If it be vain, we mutually have promised

That I should give, and you obey the signal.
Will ye confide in me?

Cas. Thou art our all.

Let us depart from hence: it is now time
To go hence to the few whom we have chosen;
And who are ready for the sake of Rome
To die with us to-morrow.

Bru. Let us go.

ACT THE FIFTH.

The Scene is in the Basilica of Pompey.

SCENE THE FIRST.

*Brutus, Cassius, Senators, who in succession take
their Places.*

Cas. It seems to me this meeting will be small;
Much smaller than the last . . .

Bru. Provided that
The hearts of the remainder be but firm,
'Tis all we want.

Cas. Dost thou, oh Brutus, hear
How the unquiet people with their cries
Already make the deafening air resound?

Bru. Their cries they vary at each new event:
Leave them; e'en they perchance to-day may help us.

Cas. I never saw thee calm as thou art now,
And so secure.

Bru. The danger spreads.

Cas. Oh Brutus! . . .

Brutus, I yield to thee alone.

Bru. Great Pompey,

Who breathes in sculptured marble here, and seems
Now to preside o'er our few partizans,
Makes me secure as to th' approaching danger.

Cas. Behold, the lictors of the tyrant coming.

Bru. Casca and Cimber, where?

Cas. Fiercely they have
ForeSTALL'd by violence the post of danger . . .
They closely follow Cæsar.

Bru. Hast thou thought
To hinder, that the impious Anthony?

Cas. Yes : Fulvius and Macrinus will at length
Keep him at bay at distance from the senate ;
If it be also needful t' intercept him,
This will they do by force.

Bru. Now all is well.
Let each one take his place — Cassius, farewell.
We from each other separate as slaves ;
Soon, as free men, I hope, we shall embrace,
Or dying — First shalt thou be witness here
To the last efforts of a son ; and then
To the last efforts of a citizen.

Cas. Each weapon on thy nod depends, oh Brutus !

SCENE THE SECOND.

Senators seated Brutus and Cassius in their places.

Cæsar, preceded by Lictors, which afterwards leave him ; Casca, Cimber, and many others, follow him. All rise at the entrance of Cæsar, and continue standing till he be seated.

Cæ. What can this mean? Scarce half the senate
here,
Although th' appointed hour be past. . . . But I

Beyond my duty have in this transgress'd.—
 Ye conscript fathers, I lament that thus
 I have detain'd you . . . But yet, what can be
 The cause that takes from me so many of you ?
 (UNIVERSAL SILENCE)

Bru. Does no one answer ? The demanded cause
 Is known to all of us. Is it not, Cæsar,
 Fully divulged to thee by this our silence
 But, would'st thou hear it ? Those whom thou seest
 here,
 Terror collected ; those whom thou seest not,
 Terror dispersed.

Cæ. I am not unaccustom'd
 To the intemperate harangues of Brutus,
 As to the generous clemency of Cæsar
 Thou art not unaccustom'd. But in vain ;
 For here I came not to dispute . . .

Bru. Nor we
 To offend thee idly. Certainly those fathers
 Were ill-advised who vanish'd from the senate
 On such a joyful day : and ill act those
 Who in the senate now stand mute. Myself,
 Fully apprized of the high sentiments
 Which Cæsar purposes t' unfold to us,
 Can scarce restrain th' expression of my joy ;
 Feeling the eager wish to dissipate
 The false alarm of others. Ah ! no, now
 Cæsar doth not within his bosom cherish
 Against his country any guilty purpose ;
 Ah no ! that generous clemency of his,
 With which to-day he has upbraided Brutus,
 And which in future he ought not to exert
 Towards me, to trembling and afflicted Rome

He hath directed all of it already.
 To-day, I swear to you, that Cæsar adds
 A new one, and the most sublime of all,
 To his so many triumphs: thence he here
 Presents himself the victor of himself,
 And of the envy of his adversaries.
 Yes, noble fathers, this I swear to you;
 Cæsar to-day assembles you to this
 His sublime triumph: he has now resolved
 To recreate himself th' associate,
 The equal of his fellow-citizens;
 This would he do spontaneously; and hence
 'Mid all the men that have been in the world,
 There never was, nor will be. Cæsar's equal.

Cæ. I might, oh Brutus, interrupt thy speech...

Bru. Nor let mine seem to you rash arrogance,
 Scarcely a prætor that I should presume
 To anticipate the words of the dictator,
 For Brutus now and the illustrious Cæsar
 Are but one person.—I behold your brows
 Arch'd with amazement: to the senators
 My language is obscure; but speedily,
 I shall make all clear with a single word.
 I am the son of Cæsar...

(AN UNIVERSAL CRY OF ASTONISHMENT.)

Bru. Yes; I am born from him; now do I thence
 Light exultation feel; since to day Cæsar
 Becomes, from a perpetual dictator,
 A first-rate, and perpetual citizen.

(AN UNIVERSAL CRY OF JOY.)

Cæ. ... Yes, Brutus is my son; I myself told
 Erewhile to him this secret. Th' energy
 The eloquence, the impetuosity,

I know not what of superhuman power
 That breathes in his discourse, made on my heart
 A deep impression : ardent, and aspiring,
 My genuine son, is Brutus. Hence, oh Romans,
 I chuse him, far more worthy than myself,
 To perform for you after me that service,
 Which now no longer lies within my power :
 I have decided to transfer to him
 My whole authority ; in him have I
 Establish'd it . in him will ye have Cæsar . . .

Br. I stand secure : not Brutus' enemies
 The most embitter'd and implacable,
 Much more his friends, then, never will believe him
Of this e'er capable ; ah no !—To me,
 Cæsar, oh Romans, yields his power : he would
 Imply by this, that Cæsar abdicates,
 At the entreaties of myself his son,
 His unjust power, that he replaces Rome
 In liberty for ever.

(AN UNIVERSAL CRY OF JOY.)

Cæ. 'Tis enough.—

Thou as my son, and younger than myself,
 Shouldest keep silence in my presence.—Now,
 Cæsar, oh fathers, speaks — I have resolved
 Irrevocably in my secret thoughts
 To go against the Parthians. To-morrow
 I march against Asia with my faithful legions :
 There have I long been summon'd, and by force
 Constrai'd to go, by th' unavenged shade
 Of Crassus. Rome I leave to Anthony ;
 In him let her behold a second Cæsar :
 Let Cimber, Cassa, Cassius now return
 To their allotted prefectures : my side

Brutus shall never quit. When I have slain
 The enemies of Rome, I will return
 And to my enemies submit myself:
 Then, at her will, whichever she likes best,
 Rome shall possess me as her citizen,
 As her dictator, or discard me quite.

(UNIVERSAL SILENCE.)

Bru. — These were not certainly, which we have
 heard,

The accents of a Roman, of my father,
 Nor e'en of Cæsar. These were the harsh words
 Of a despotic king.—Ah! father, yet
 Hear me once more; behold my tears, and hear
 Th' entreaties of a son and citizen.
 Now all Rome by my mouth addresses thee.
 Behold that Brutus, whom no man e'er saw
 Hitherto weep or supplicate; behold him
 Prostrate before thee. Would'st thou be to me,
 And not to Rome, a father?

Cæ. I will not

Listen to prayers which are a public insult.
 Arise: be mute.—He dares to call me tyrant;
 But I am not one: if I were, had I
 Myself permitted him to offer me
 Such gross indignities before all Rome?—
 What the dictator in his mind hath fix'd,
 Should all be executed. Thus commands
 The interest of Rome; and every man
 Who doubts now, or refuses to obey me,
 Is th' enemy of Rome; hostile to her,
 He is an impious traitor.

Bru. Then let all

Of us now, as true citizens should do,

Obey the dictator.¹

Cim. Die, tyrant, die!

Cas. And may I smite him also!

Cæ. Traitors...

Bru. Ah! *He smites himself.*

And must I be the only one to spare him?...

Some Senators. Die, let the tyrant die!

Other Senators, flying. Oh day of horrors!

*Cæ.*² Son,... and thou too!... I die...

Bru. Oh Rome!... Oh father!...

Cim. But at the cries of the pale fugitives,
The people flock already in a crowd...

Cas. Let them come in; the tyrant is no more.
Let us now hasten to slay Anthony.

SCENE THE THIRD.

People, Brutus, Cæsar dead.

People. What has now happen'd? What cries
we hear?

What blood is this? Ah Brutus yonder stands
Immoveable with his uplifted dagger!

Bru. People of Mars, (if yet ye are so) thither,
Now thither turn your looks. Behold who lies
At mighty Pompey's feet...

People. Cæsar! Oh sight!...
He in his blood immersed!... oh rage!

— — —

¹ Brutus unsheathes his dagger, and brandishes it aloft; the conspirators cart towards Cæsar with their swords.

² Oppressed with wounds, dragging himself to the statue of Pompey, and having covered his face with his robe, he dies.

Bru. Yes, Cæsar
Lies in his blood immersed : and I, though ye
See in my hand a blade not stain'd with blood,
I too, with others, I too slaughter'd Cæsar . . .

People. Ah traitor ! thou shalt die . . .

Bru. Already, see,
The weapon's point is turn'd towards my breast.
I mean to die : but listen to me first.

People. Let those be murder'd first who transfix'd
Cæsar . . .

Bru. Ye seek in vain for other murderers :
Dispersed amid the fluctuating crowd
The assassins have already disappear'd.
Save Brutus, 'tis in vain for ye to seek
Another murderer. If ye are impell'd
By fury here, thirsting t' avenge the death
Of the dictator, let the life of Brutus
Now pacify your vengeance.—But, if yet
The name of true and sacred liberty
Reverberates in your hearts, and in your souls,
Open your breasts t' unutterable joy :
There he lies dead, there he lies dead at last,
The king of Rome.

People. What is it that thou sayest ?

Bru. The king of Rome, yes, I confirm it to you,
And swear that he was such : he *was* a king :
Such he spoke here ; and such he shew'd himself,
During the Lupercalia, to yourselves,
That day, when he feigning the guilty crown
Was his abhorrence, three times made the hand
Of Anthony refit it on his head.
The infamous collusion pleased you not ;
And he became convinced by certain proof,

That, save by force, he ne'er would be a king.
 Hence, he would now have left Rome for the camp,
 Planning new wars, while she is quite exhausted
 Of men and arms and treasures ; certain hence
 By dint of arms here to return a king,
 And make you wit' harsh penalties repent
 The interdicted crown, Gold, flatteries, games,
 Banquets, and spectacles, he lavish'd on you,
 To make you slaves : but th' impious attempt
 Was ineffectual ; Romans, ye sell not
 Your liberty ; and yet I see you all
 Ready to die for it : and I am also,
 I, yes, as much as you. Rome now is free ;
 Brutus would now die satisfied. Be quick ;
 And sacrifice him who restores to you
 Life, liberty, and virtue ; yes, do ye
 Sacrifice Brutus to avenge your king.
 Behold my breast defenceless . . . let him kill me
 Who still would be a slave. But he ought now
 Who will not murder me, to follow me,
 And terminate the enterprize by force.

People. What words are these ? A god inspires
 him.

Bru. Ah !

I see the formér parasites of Cæsar
 Become by little and by little Romans.
 Now hear if Brutus also be a Roman —
 Are there among you who have hitherto
 E'en ever dreamt of that which I am now
 About to tell you with a solemn oath.—
 The tyrant Cæsar was my real father.

People. Oh heaven ! What is it that thou tellest
 us ? . . .

Bru. I am the son of Cæsar; this I swear;
He himself yesterday reveal'd to me
The secret, and I swear to you, he wish'd
To leave me, pledge of his paternal love,
As if it were his proper heritage,
Tranquil and undisputed, wish'd one
To leave me, his authority in Rome.

People. Oh vile audacity . . .

Bru. And thence he dared
Discover all his guilty views to me . . .

People. Then (ah too certainly!) he did design
At length to shew himself a thorough tyrant . .

Bru. I, as a son, wept, and entreated him;
And lastly, as a citizen, conjured him
T' abandon th' infamous design: ah! what
Did I not do, to change him from a king? . . .
I e'en entreated from him as a gift
Death; which from his hands I should more have
prized

Than all his surreptitious royalty:
But all in vain: in his tyrannical breast
He had resolved to reign, or die. I then
The signal gave to kill him; I gave it
Myself to a firm few: meanwhile on high
I raised my trembling and suspended arm.

People. Oh pristine virtue! oh true Brutus!

Bru. Yes;
The king of Rome is slain; for this should we
Pay homage to the gods: but yet has Brutus
Slain his own father; . . . and he merits death
From you. And think ye I would live? . . . I ought
For a few instants still, while I exert
Myself with you to give security

To Rome's regenerated commonwealth.
 The lofty duties yet must be fulfill'd
 Of citizen, and of deliverer ;
 For these alone Brutus consents to live :
 But a higher obligation also dooms
 The impious and parricidal son
 Of the great Cæsar to immolate himself,
 With his own hands, upon his father's tomb.

People. Oh dire event ! . . . Amazement, terror,
 pity ; . . .

Oh, what a multitude of impulses
 Have we at once experienced ! . . . But . . . oh sight !
 E'en in the midst of rage, Brutus himself
 Also dissolves in tears . . .

Bru. — I weep, oh Romans ;
 I weep for Cæsar dead. Sublime endowments
 Not to be equal'd in the world ; a soul,
 Which never had its counterpart, had Cæsar :
 Base is that heart which weeps not for him dead —
 But, who dare now again to wish him living
 Is not a Roman.

People. Thine are words of fire,
 Oh Brutus . . .

Bru. May yours then be deeds of fire ;
 The deed is lofty ; worthy of ourselves ;
 Follow my steps ; and let us now restore
 Full and eternal liberty to Rome.

People. For Rome, ah ! yes, following thy steps
 we're ready
 For all ; for any thing . . .

Bru. Make speed then, now
 Let us go quickly to the Capitol ;
 This is the seat sacred to liberty :

Would ye now leave it in the hands of traitors?

People. Let us depart: and wrest from traitors' hands

The sacred citadel.

Bru. To death, to death
Or freedom let us go!

People. To death, to death
With Brutus, or to freedom we depart.

FAREWELL.

Judgment suggests to me that I should here
Release my feet from the Italian buskin,
(If it indeed e'er graced them) and that I
Should to myself swear never to resume it.

1787.

¹ Brutus moves forward, fiercely brandishing his sword; the people all follow him with fury.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

EDINBURGH:

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